Commentary
June 2001

Funding the Faithful: Why Bush Is Right

Leslie Lenkowsky

Too Darn Hot?

Kevin A. Shapiro

Growing Up Anglo-Jewish

John Gross

An End to Counting by Race?

Tamar Jacoby

Howie's Gift—A Story

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When Presidents Speak

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The Riddle of Yehudi Menuhin

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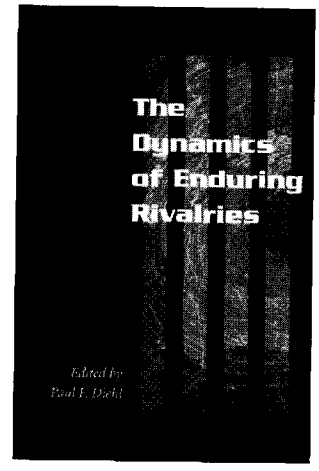

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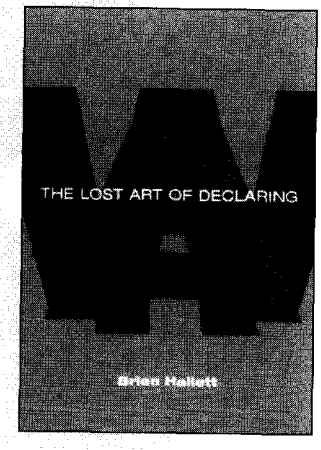

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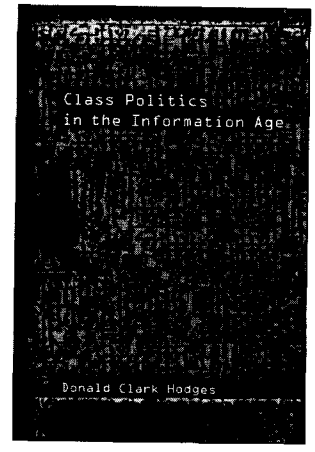

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June 2001

Letters from Readers

Identity Crisis

To the Editor:

In "Surrendering to Intermarriage" [March], Jack Wertheimer raises important issues that Reform Judaism has been wrestling with for more than twenty years. Unfortunately, despite his extensive references to studies and published materials, he is apparently uninformed about the reality of what goes on in homes and synagogues all over North America. In fact, Mr. Wertheimer gets almost everything wrong. Let me suggest some correctives.

Encouraging Jews to marry Jews and welcoming interfaith families are not, as Mr. Wertheimer suggests, mutually exclusive activities. Both are *mitzvot*—religious duties—and both are needed in today's complex world. Prior to the Reform movement's outreach efforts, interfaith families were ostracized from the Jewish community, guaranteeing that the Jewish partner and the children would be lost to us forever. Reform synagogues now invite these families to make Jewish choices, which they often do.

Contrary to Mr. Wertheimer's assertion, the 1983 resolution on patrilineal descent of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) does not "blur the definition of who Jews *are*." Neither does it "arbitrarily" confer Jewish status. Rather, it sets a different standard for Jewishness, one that depends on Jewish identification and behavior, not solely on the bloodline of a parent. In that respect, it is far more demanding than the definition according to Jewish law. Patrilineal descent, more appropriately called "parental decision," has opened the door into Jewish life for tens of thousands of children from interfaith families.

Reform rabbis across North America report the conversion of increasing numbers of non-Jewish spouses who have created a Jewish home and found a warm community in the synagogue. Indeed, non-Jewish and converting spouses often help their Jewish partners find their way back to Judaism. Outreach to interfaith families is not about "lowering the bar," as Mr. Wertheimer would have it; it is about forming and strengthening Jewish identity.

Far from being "quixotic," as Mr. Wertheimer puts it, opening the door to *all* sincere seekers, Jewish or not, has been successful. "A Taste of Judaism: Are You Curious?," our free introduction to Jewish texts on spirituality, ethics, and community, has attracted 35,000 participants to overflowing classes from Honolulu to Toronto to Miami. Almost half are unaffiliated Jews, and of these, 28 percent subsequently join a synagogue. Many others, intermarried or not, are looking for a way into Jewish life, and 14 percent convert. The synergy of non-Jews and Jews exploring Judaism together is what makes this program work.

Loudly and passionately condemning the evils of intermarriage, as Jack Wertheimer does, may alleviate some frustration and rage in the short term, but it is likely to be persuasive only to the already convinced. More effective for the Jewish future is engaging daily and directly in a thoughtful, caring, and, yes, passionate way with both Jews and those who are strangers among us.

Dru Greenwood
Director
Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach
New York City

To the Editor:

In venting his hostility to intermarriage and outreach, Jack Wertheimer deliberately distorts both my views and the goals of InterfaithFamily.com. Far from "peddling" a message favoring multiple allegiances, we en-

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courage interfaith families to choose Judaism as the religion of their family and to raise their children exclusively as Jews. *The Guide to Jewish Interfaith Family Life*, an anthology of our articles, will be brought out this fall by Jewish Lights Publishing. I oppose not conversion, but its excessive promotion—just as I oppose forbidding non-Jewish parents from sharing in synagogue honors at the bar or bat mitzvah of their child—because these measures discourage engagement in Jewish life by interfaith families. (For my own statement on this question, see www.interfaithfamily.com/article/issue32/case.html.)

The arguments that Mr. Wertheimer draws from Torah, social science, and social psychology are intellectually dishonest. He asserts that the Torah prohibits intermarriage, but it prohibits intermarriage only with seven specified nations, and indeed many of the Torah's leading figures were themselves intermarried. He declares the outreach effort a "resounding failure" despite the fact that many intermarried couples are not even aware of it, as reported by Bruce A. Phillips, on whose study Mr. Wertheimer heavily but selectively relies. And his declaration that "Christmas and Hanukkah are irreconcilably antithetical" demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of Jewish interfaith families: many, including those in which there has been a conversion, participate in the celebration of their non-Jewish relatives' holiday without compromising the Jewish identity of their own family or children.

The percentage of interfaith families who raise their children exclusively as Jews is unacceptably low. But we do not know what that percentage would be if the Jewish community were to become truly welcoming, making a concerted, well-financed, and well-publicized outreach effort. What I see at InterfaithFamily.com—thousands of monthly readers seeking content that informs them how they can live Jewishly—strongly suggests the percentage would become much higher. In a recent online survey, many readers said our website was their first experience of acceptance in the Jewish community, and several said it led them to connect with a local synagogue. But many reported experiencing rejection by Jews and not knowing that any part of the Jewish community welcomed them. Mr. Wertheimer's strategy of trying to prevent intermarriage is not only futile, it contributes directly to the rejection and unwelcome that are obstacles to affiliation by interfaith families.

I have been intermarried for 27 years, have raised two Jewish young adults with my wife, am the immediate past president of a major Reform synagogue, and gave up a large law firm partnership in 1997 to do graduate work in Jewish communal service at Brandeis's Hornstein program. I know firsthand what is possible with a positive response to intermarriage, and in my work I do everything I can to help to create, within intermarriages, Jewish households that otherwise might not be—and that will not be, if Mr. Wertheimer and his allies have their way. By responding negatively, writing off prospective Jewish families and children, *they* are the ones who are "surrendering to intermarriage."

EDMUND CASE
Publisher
InterfaithFamily.com
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

We at the Jewish Outreach Institute speak on behalf of the nearly 1 million intermarried families in the United States, representing a full third of American Jewry. We speak for the parents, siblings, and other relatives of the intermarried, who understand that marrying a non-Jew is an expression of love, and not necessarily a rejection of Jewish heritage. These relatives want to create a more welcoming, inclusive Judaism, where Jewish and non-Jewish family members alike can find meaning and enlightenment without being made to feel like second-class citizens or being told to "convert first, feel welcome later."

Many of these families are part of the Conservative movement with which Mr. Wertheimer is affiliated. They live Jewish lives, attend synagogues, participate in Jewish holiday celebrations, and raise Jewish children. We know these people because we work with them every day. They are neither strangers nor pariahs.

There are simply too many misrepresented facts in Mr. Wertheimer's article to be answered in a limited space. (We have posted a full refutation on our website, at www.joi.org/commentary.) What the anti-intermarriage movement boils down to, however, is one idea: that the Jewish community should not waste time or money reaching out to the intermarried. Our own research, the results of which will be released over the coming months, demonstrates that outreach to the intermarried *does* increase Jewish affiliation and *is* worth the effort.

Of course, many Jewish families and professionals already know this, and they—like us—know that the future of Judaism lies in inclusiveness. We are just thankful Jack Wertheimer was not around to advise our forbear Abraham as to which side of his tent to keep open and which side to close.

RABBI KERRY M. OLITZKY
Executive Director
Jewish Outreach Institute
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I was raised in an observant Jewish family in Detroit, went to Hebrew school through twelfth grade, and led a social life almost exclusively within the youth group at our synagogue. I knew what it would mean to marry outside the faith, both to my family and to the Jewish community. I felt great pressure to marry a Jewish girl, and I sensed the same pressure in the Jewish girls that I met, such that our relationships had a mercenary taste to them.

I rebelled and married a Southern Baptist woman who, after 25 years of marriage, remains a Southern Baptist. We have raised three boys, all of whom have been bar-mitzvahed and identify themselves as Jews, but still feel comfortable going to church with their mother. I do not know what religious path my sons will ultimately take, but I hope they come to an understanding of God and cre-

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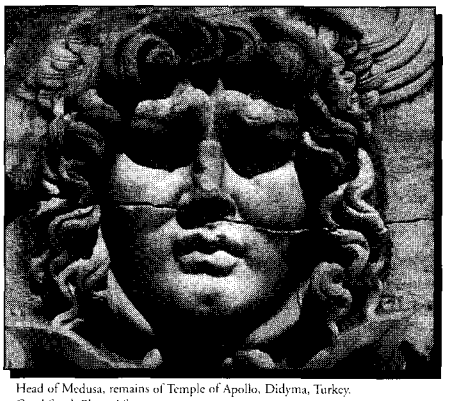

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ation that will bring them peace. If they choose not to do this as Jews, I do not believe I will have had a hand in the demise of Judaism.

DAVID J. MARWIL
Lexington, Kentucky

TO THE EDITOR:

My problem with Jack Wertheimer's approach is that while he deplores the high rate of intermarriage, he criticizes efforts to encourage the conversion of the non-Jewish partner, implying that these efforts only undermine Jewish inmarriage. But he offers no alternatives.

The time to discuss intermarriage with children is when they approach dating age. By the time they seek out a clergyman to discuss a marriage ceremony, it is too late. In my 50-plus years in the rabbinate, I have never been able to discourage the marriage of any mixed couple that turned to me for premarital counseling. At that point, the primary item on the agenda is conversion. With a falling birth rate in the Jewish community, the conversion of non-Jewish spouses may be the one remaining source of needed numbers.

RABBI STANLEY RABINOWITZ
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Wertheimer is quite right to emphasize the power of intermarriage to break down boundaries needed for Jewish survival. I certainly agree with him that the Jewish religious movements ought to be attentive to the challenges of maintaining Judaism's boundaries even as they concern themselves with various forms of outreach.

Mr. Wertheimer could be more precise, however, in his analysis of how the various movements handle these challenges. Contrary to his portrayal, the Reconstructionist movement defines a child who has one non-Jewish parent as Jewish only when the child is raised exclusively as a Jew in terms of education and life-cycle events, in the context of an active and committed Jewish community. Furthermore, the Reconstructionist movement takes a clear stance that non-Jews should be welcomed in the synagogue but cannot have the same rights as Jews, particularly in regard to such ritual matters as leading worship or receiving an *aliyah* (the honor of being called to the Torah).

I am not aware of any evidence that the refusal of rabbis to officiate at intermarriages has actually reduced the number of these ceremonies. Thus, the question is not so much whether rabbis should officiate at them (though I do not) as how to create an environment in which conversion continues to be seen as the optimal result when a Jew and a non-Jew form a permanent relationship. Our outreach and educational efforts should continue to emphasize creating Jewish homes that are not syncretistic and encouraging conversion to Judaism where it can be done with a commitment of conscience.

RABBI DAVID A. TEUTSCH
President
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
Wyncote, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

I do not remember her name. I only remember her question to the priest and to me, the rabbi: "My daddy is Jewish and my mommy is Christian, and they didn't raise me up to be anything. Do you know how I could be raised up to be something?" Her pain and confusion and rootlessness are the face we need to put on the statistics and surveys so ably summarized by Jack Wertheimer. There are real children out there who are going religiously homeless because their yuppie parents just cannot get it together to help them feel at home in either a church or a synagogue.

When we Jews discovered that intermarriage had risen from 10 percent or less in the 1960's to over 50 percent in the 1990's, we thought that the casualty rate was evenly divided: three out of ten of the children of intermarriage were raised as Jews, three out of ten as Christians, and four out of ten as nothing or both. Not so, we now learn. We only get 14 percent, not 33 percent, of the kids. The truly chilling statistic, not mentioned in Mr. Wertheimer's piece, is that less than 5 percent of the grandchildren of intermarriages are raised as Jews. In other words, in every intermarriage there is a virtual statistical certainty that Judaism will die in that family in just one more generation.

Mr. Wertheimer rightly bemoans the response to this demographic holocaust, but there are reasons that go well beyond myopia, cowardice, and ignorance. Here are some other decisive and depressing factors that keep the surrender to intermarriage proceeding apace:

The membership boom for Reform Judaism. The Reform movement has vaulted past Conservative Judaism in numbers of members and size of congregations, and all of this growth is from the obvious fact that intermarried couples feel more accepted in Reform temples than in any other branch of Judaism. Even Reform rabbis like myself who do not perform intermarriages have benefited from a huge influx of intermarried couples who have nowhere else to go.

Frighteningly assertive couples. The pariah status of intermarriage is dead and gone in the Reform movement, and with it the shame and the guilt. Most rabbis are just no match for powerhouse intermarried couples who do not want to hear nuanced reservations based on Jewish law from someone who drives on the Sabbath and eats shrimp.

The same-sex marriage bind. As the Reform movement continues its leftward lunge, rabbis are finding it impossible to sell congregants on the idea that it is okay for them to officiate at the marriage of David and Steven but not at the marriage of David and Christine. Congregations are not going to listen to some self-serving contrivance about how gay marriage is no threat to Jewish values while intermarriage is.

What can be done?

A number of answers, I believe, will in time attract a consensus among the dwindling Jewish population of America: 1) the creation of academically outstanding Jewish day schools serving primarily non-Orthodox students; 2) the development of well-endowed Jewish camps rivaling those that now attract the majority of suburban upper-middle-class Jewish children; 3) the drastic reduction, through

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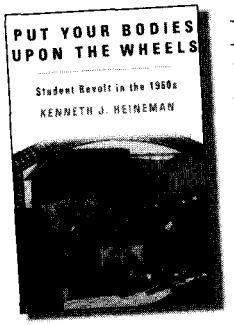

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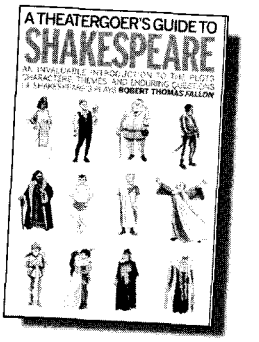

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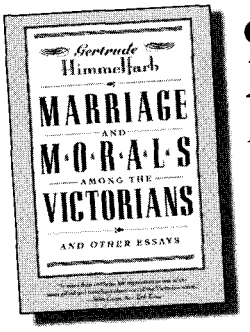

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subsidies, of the cost of membership in synagogues and Jewish community centers; 4) the creation of a broad media presence for Judaism and Jewish life; and, above all else, 5) rabbis, teachers, and leaders who will teach and model Judaism as a faith and a culture that is personally compelling, transformative, and ennobling.

Trying to halt intermarriage by guilt or shame will not work. Trying to convince Jews in love with Christians that they need to end their love for the good of the Jewish people will not work. Only a personal faith in Judaism has the power to move an individual to want to share that faith with his or her mate and to make it a priority in their home.

RABBI MARC GELLMAN
President
New York Board of Rabbis
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Wertheimer offers a compelling case that the Jewish community's will to resist mixed marriage is in danger of collapse. In an American culture that so overwhelmingly endorses interfaith marriage, the Jews will stand virtually alone if they are to mount a counterargument.

Fortunately, the situation may not be as bleak as Mr. Wertheimer describes. Officially, all the religious streams within Judaism continue to resist mixed marriage. The Conservative movement recently resolved that those employed in "role-model" positions (rabbis, educators, cantors, etc.) in its institutions ought to have Jewish spouses. Even more surprisingly, the movement's youth organization has urged its officers to refrain from dating non-Jews. The Reform movement, too, has formally opposed admitting children raised partially in another faith to its educational institutions, and has refused to approve rabbinic officiation at interfaith unions.

To be sure, there are those who counsel communal neutrality, in a well-intentioned effort to bring families back into the fold. The American Jewish Committee, though supportive of reaching out to interfaith couples, believes that we cannot afford such neutrality. Rather, we must underscore the contemporary vitality of both Judaism and Jewish peoplehood, and communicate that Jewish ideals are best realized through being shared with Jewish spouses and in the raising of Jewish children. For millennia, Judaism has survived precisely due to its ability to swim against the tide and articulate countercultural messages. Jack Wertheimer's essay eloquently makes the case that we should continue to do so.

STEVEN BAYME
American Jewish Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

No one has laid out both the grim facts and likely consequences of intermarriage as clearly or as forcefully as Jack Wertheimer. As far as policy is concerned, however, he falls a little short, merely indicating where we are headed if we continue following current trends rather than spelling out what must be done if those trends are to be reversed.

It is true, as Mr. Wertheimer points out, that any solution to the problem of intermarriage is bound to be painful. It is so widespread that virtually every family is affected by it. When the non-Jewish spouse is told that he or she may not participate in a child's bar-mitzvah ceremony, the entire family may drop out. And the concern appears to be legitimate that a rabbi who refuses to officiate at an interfaith wedding may alienate the young couple altogether. What are we to do?

I hope I will not appear to be too banal if I cite a recent letter to shareholders from the executives of General Electric. They refer to a type of manager who "doesn't share the values" of GE, but "delivers the numbers." Despite their success, they say, such managers must be removed, and it must be made clear to the entire company that they were asked to leave "not for the usual 'personal reasons' or 'to pursue other opportunities,' but *for not sharing our values*." They go on to say that until an organization has the courage to do this, people will never believe that these values are real.

Perhaps the American Jewish community can at last bring itself to believe in its values at least as strongly as GE does. I would not suggest that we bring back the ugly rituals associated with *herem* (excommunication). But we should be able to say to members of our community that we do have standards, that we know what they are, and that we are willing to stick by them; that although we are ready to receive with open arms anyone who sincerely wants to join us, we will not accept insincere, half-way measures, and we will most assuredly not grant the privileges that go with membership in the Jewish community to those who have not assumed its obligations; and finally, that we do not accept the notion that in refusing to compromise our principles and our values we are "alienating" those who demand that we do so. On the contrary, those who choose to intermarry have alienated themselves.

BURTON M. LEISER
Pace University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Wertheimer makes many good points and ends by calling upon American Jewish leaders to speak out against bland universalism and in favor of Jewish particularity and tradition. But there is a problem with this: the astronomical rate of intermarriage among American non-Orthodox Jews is a reflection of the fact that what is promoted as Judaism by much of the Jewish establishment in the United States is shallow, empty, and meaningless and has nothing to do with Jewish values and traditions.

Much of the Reform and Reconstructionist movements, parts of the Conservative movement, and the various Jewish "defense" organizations have invented a form of pseudo-Judaism that is nothing more than political liberalism. Dressed up in an egregious misrepresentation of the talmudic idea of "*tikkun olam*"—the proper ordering of the world—and intentional misreadings of the biblical prophets, this ideology has replaced Judaism for large segments of the community. Once Judaism has been reduced to the pursuit of this week's politically correct fad, marrying a liberal Gentile is not intermarriage at all. Both

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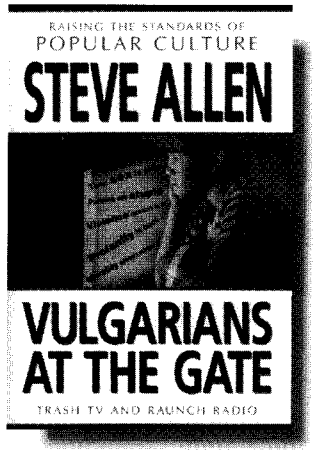

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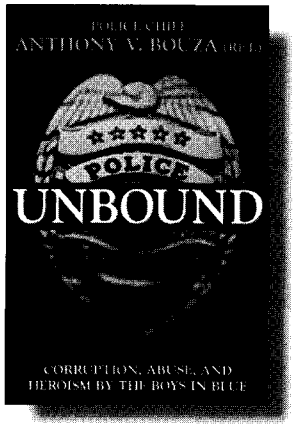

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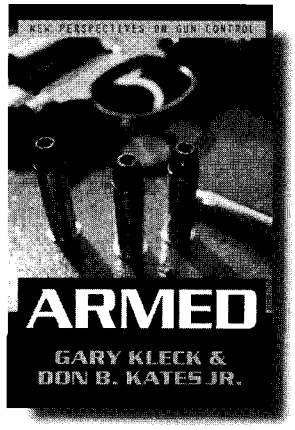

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partners are practicing the same "religion."

STEVEN PLAUT
Haifa, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Wertheimer gives an unsoftened description of the realities of intermarriage in the United States. To stem and reverse this pernicious tide, he correctly argues we must "be willing to assert without apology the absolute worth of [Jewish] traditions and beliefs." I would add a practical addendum: we must provide opportunities for young Jews of both sexes to meet and to study these traditions and beliefs and develop the habit of dating other Jews.

Such places do exist in the form of today's growing number of co-ed Jewish high schools. Here Jewish youngsters learn to interact with members of the opposite sex and to think in terms of love and marriage, but in a setting somewhat apart from contemporary secular sexual mores. The truth is that in our free-flowing society the adolescent years are the critical ones. By the time college rolls around, the damage is already done.

RONALD GRUEN
Dallas, Texas

TO THE EDITOR:

As one who does battle in the arena, I would add one suggestion to Jack Wertheimer's essay. When I was a rabbi in Washington, D.C., I created an enormous singles program in my synagogue. Well over a hundred Jewish marriages resulted. I even recall two people, each of them previously intermarried and divorced, who met in my singles program and got married. If you offer an ample number of members of the opposite sex and a program of thoughtful content, even Jewish singles who are seemingly indifferent will come.

It is not enough simply to announce that young Jews should meet each other. Jewish leadership needs to put its money into programs for college students, trips to Israel for young people, and synagogue events for young professionals. If Judaism is worth preserving, it is worth making exciting and accessible to young people on the threshold of making their life commitments.

RABBI STEPHEN LISTFIELD
Congregation Beth Shalom
Pompton Lakes, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

One of the best ways to lower the incidence of Jewish intermarriages may be to publicize their high rate of failure. One-third of all marriages end in divorce within five years, but intermarried couples divorce at almost twice that rate.

S. C. YUTER
Briarcliff Manor, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with nodding frustration and all-too-familiar recognition the perceptive lament of Jack Wertheimer.

There is scarcely an American rabbi, certainly no Reform or Conservative rabbi, who cannot testify to the validity of Mr. Wertheimer's central thesis: the American Jewish resistance to wholesale assimilation is rapidly melting away. All too often, outreach has become a euphemism for surrender, a cover for overt syncretism. We know now (as if we did not before) that fifteen minutes under a wedding canopy does not make a Jewish home, pre-

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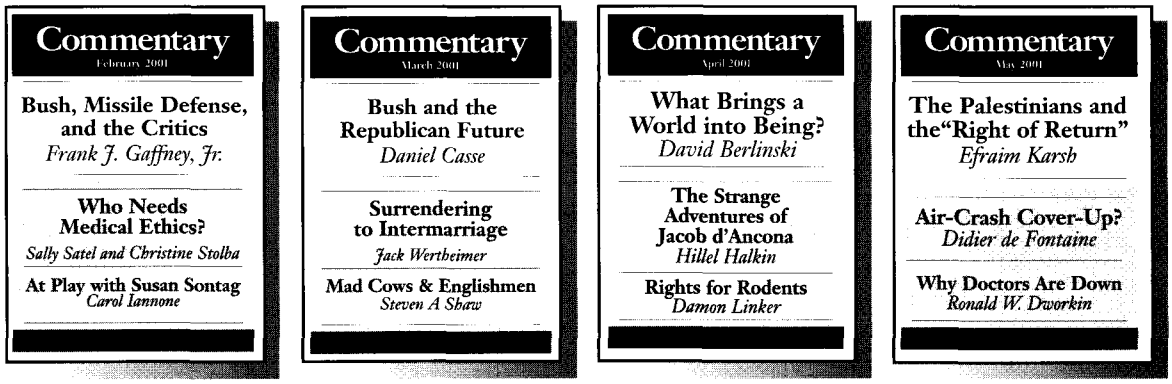

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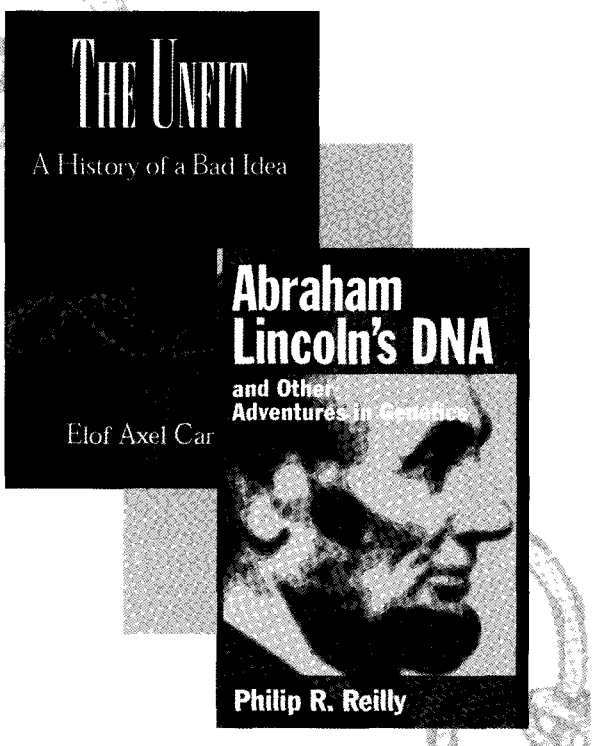

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serve Jewish peoplehood, or encourage the raising of children who will identify themselves as Jews.

RABBI CLIFFORD E. LIBRACH
Temple Sinai
Sharon, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Hearty and heart-felt congratulations to Jack Wertheimer. As he points out, American Jews have lost the ability to hold individuals accountable for behaving in ways that are physically or spiritually detrimental to the well-being of the community as a whole, choosing instead to affirm the "right" of people to live their lives as they please.

Those who consider this "right" absolute would do well to remember the story of the two men who owned a boat. One day, in the middle of a lake, one of them began drilling a hole beneath his seat. His friend started screaming, "What are you doing?" The first man replied indignantly, "What concern is it of yours what I do on my side of the boat?"

RABBI CARY KOZBERG
Columbus, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

We have come to expect reasoned and strong advocacy from Jack Wertheimer, and he does not disappoint on the issue of intermarriage. One can only pray that after we take our losses from intermarriage and low Jewish fertility rates, those who remain in a somewhat smaller Jewish community will have a real renaissance, and that this community will go on to write new chapters in its glorious history

DONALD FELDSTEIN
Teaneck, New Jersey

JACK WERTHEIMER writes:

The critical responses to my article by Dru Greenwood, Edmund Case, and Kerry M. Olitzky, all of them active members of the outreach establishment, are hardly surprising. Still, I am taken aback by the unqualified tone of self-congratulation in their claims for the supposed successes of their programs. Given the actual state of things among most of those they say they have "reached," all I can reply is that a few more successes like theirs and we will be well and truly lost.

I will let the eloquent letters of Rabbis Clifford E. Librach, Cary Kozberg, and, especially, Marc Gellman—each of them a member of the Reform rabbinate—serve to refute Dru Greenwood's assertion that I am "uninformed" and get "almost everything wrong." For my part, I challenge her to "inform" us with more than mere assertion. She avers, for example, that "Reform rabbis across North America report the conversion of increasing numbers of non-Jewish spouses." One would like to see some substantiation of this remarkable statement. Most demographers are persuaded that, to the contrary, rates of conversion to Judaism have plummeted since the policy on "patrilineality" was introduced in 1983.

Similarly unqualified is Greenwood's assertion that 28 percent of those who graduate from her "Taste of Judaism" program have joined synagogues. Does she have any independent data permitting us to judge what actually goes on in the households of intermarried Jews who are affiliated with Reform synagogues? Do they maintain an unambiguous commitment to Judaism? Or are they more like the dual-faith family of David J. Marwil, who professes not to know or care about the religion his children will eventually espouse? What proportion of such families celebrate Christian holidays, or ex-

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What are the facts?

How did it come about? First of all, the claim that this uprising came about as a result of Mr. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount is a silly and flimsy pretext. This uprising, now several months old, was carefully planned and continues to be orchestrated by the Palestinian Authority, of which Yasser Arafat is chairman. He pulls all the strings; nothing happens without his approval.

So far, hundreds have died and thousands have been wounded in this uprising -- most of them Palestinians, including children and even babies. Unbelievable though it may seem to us, Palestinian children who have died or who have been injured were deliberately put into the crossfire by their parents. Israeli children who were killed or who were injured were, in every case, victims of snipers, who deliberately targeted those innocents for their bloody purposes.

Israel cannot permit this situation to continue indefinitely. And the way to stop it in an instant is for Mr. Arafat to give the word to do so.

There are two kinds of Israeli victims: Those who are ambushed in random terror attacks against civilians, either on the highways or in the cities, by snipers, by suicide bombers or by Arabs deliberately driving their cars into unsuspecting crowds. And then there are the victims of the never-ending war in the streets. It is typically fought with rocks thrown by teenagers and even children in the front, and by soldiers with bombs, Molotov cocktails, and guns in the background. The weapons used are those that the Israelis foolishly gave to the Palestinians for their "police force" or which, in full violation of the Oslo Accord, the Palestinians smuggled into the territory of the Palestinian Authority.

It is true that the number of Palestinian casualties is substantially larger than those of the Israelis. This disparity is partly the result of the decision of the Palestinians to create martyrs and to evoke world sympathy for their plight and -- the ultimate hope -- to have an international force, a U.N. contingent, stationed in Israel or in the territories. The other reason that the number of Palestinian casualties is greater is that the Palestinian mobs attack the Israeli military in large numbers; soldiers, having to defend themselves and avoid being overrun, inevitably cause casualties in protecting themselves.

Just imagine your son or daughter being one of the Israeli soldiers. Howling mobs throwing rocks (yes, they hurt and kill!) attack the soldiers. From the unseen depths of the attacking mob come gunfire, grenades, and flying bottles of flaming gasoline. What, if you were in charge, would you tell the Israeli soldiers to do? Respond, as they do now in most cases, with rubber bullets? Or would this be the time to use live ammunition? You know what the answer is.

Israel is a civilized and democratic country. The reality, because Israel is a civilized and democratic country, is that, rather than use "excessive force", Israel is using almost unbelievable restraint, in order to keep casualties to a very minimum. There can be no question that if any real force, let alone "excessive force", were used, the number of casualties would be many times greater. Remember what happened in Somalia? Under similar circumstances, the helicopters were called in and mercilessly gunned down the insurgents! Within minutes, hundreds were killed -- more casualties than in the many months that the Israeli military has allowed this uprising to continue.

Israel's restraint is based on its own valuation of human life, but also on a regard for world opinion, which, in this case, as so many times before, is ready to label Israelis the aggressors or, in the most execrable of tastes, to compare them to the Nazis.

Even though many have died so far in this intifada, the toll would have been much, much greater were it not for the restraint and the discipline of Israeli troops and the measured response policy of the Israeli government. In order to avoid provoking the Arabs, Israel has on occasion even refrained from bringing in helicopters to evacuate wounded soldiers.

Can you imagine what the response of government troops would be if such an uprising were to occur in any of the Arab countries -- say, Syria, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt? Many thousands would die. Ultimately, however, if this violence does not abate, Israel will indeed have to use adequate force (not "excessive force") to quell it, even at the risk of international condemnation. But it is clear that Israel cannot permit this situation to continue indefinitely. It must be stopped. And the way to stop it in an instant is for Mr. Arafat to give the word to do so. He has not done that so far. In fact, and because it serves his purposes, he is the key instigator.

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pose their children to a Christian religious education? To what extent, if any, do the children reared in those homes identify themselves with Jewish life once they reach adulthood?

Edmund Case indignantly challenges my suggestion that his website, InterfaithFamily.com, fails to live up to its professed goal of "encourag[ing] Jewish choices." Let me remind him of a few recent articles to be found in his online magazine. My favorite, penned by a rabbi, explains how it is "not only possible, but easier than you might think" to "create a wedding ceremony that includes aspects of both traditions without offending anyone." (The short answer: "almost any mix of Jewish and Christian elements can create a sensitive and beautiful interfaith ceremony.") Another article, by a Christian woman married to a Jew, celebrates her acceptance by members of her synagogue, even though she has chosen *not* to convert to Judaism and remains active in the local Presbyterian church. In still a third piece, a Christian woman explains how tensions in her family "relaxed" once her Jewish partner acquiesced in her demands for a family Christmas tree, something she insisted upon so that her future children would "cherish the Christmas traditions of my childhood: decorating a tree; singing carols; leaving cookies and milk for Santa."

What each of these articles affirms is the goal not of encouraging "Jewish choices" but of, at best, a merging of Judaism and Christianity within the same household. That alone makes a mockery of Mr. Case's charge that I am the one "writing off prospective Jewish families." To the contrary: while I emphatically differ with him on what constitutes a Jewish family, my own goal is to create more of them, and better ones.

Which brings me to the so-called "inclusive Judaism" of Kerry Olitzky, whose promised online posting of a "full refutation" of my article is still not available as I write at the beginning of May. "The anti-intermarriage movement," Rabbi Olitzky states here, "boils down to one idea: that the Jewish community should not waste time or money reaching out to the intermarried." In fact, I never made any such argument. Rather, I highlighted the abysmal record of outreach efforts, and lamented the many ways in which they distort Judaism in the name of a *false* inclusiveness.

The latter tendency is exemplified nicely by Rabbi Olitzky's referring to a legend about the hospitable nature of the patriarch Abraham even as he willfully ignores what the Bible itself tells us explicitly in introducing the progenitor of the Jewish people—namely, that in order to "convert" to monotheism and take up his mandate, Abraham had to heed God's command to "go forth from your native land and from your father's house." Judaism is indeed an inclusive faith, and anyone seeking to join it can do so by means of conversion; but conversion requires a radical break with one's past, a fact that advocates of outreach systematically obfuscate when they do not deny it altogether.

On this point, I am afraid that Rabbi Stanley Rabinowitz misunderstood me. He and I are in complete accord on the priority of ensuring the conversion of Gentiles married to Jews. I am deeply skeptical, however, of some schemes promoted in recent years to missionize within American society at large and to seek wholesale conversions to Judaism. Dru Greenwood's report of a conversion rate of merely 14 percent among attendees of the Reform movement's outreach program reinforces my belief that conversion will appeal to only a small minority.

Rabbi David A. Teutsch provides helpful clarification of the Reconstructionist movement's official policy. But the question remains whether congregations actually enforce the restrictions he enunciates, particularly in the face of the enormous pressure that is brought to bear on rabbis. Similarly with the checks put in place within the Conservative and Reform movements and reported on by Steven Bayme in his letter; here, too, my fear is that, as communal resistance to intermarriage erodes, official pronouncements will be increasingly ignored "on the ground." See, in this connection, Rabbi Marc Gellman's trenchant and unvarnished analysis of congregational realities.

I am particularly grateful to those of my correspondents—Steven Bayme, Burton Leiser, Steven Plaut, and Rabbi Kozberg—who support my call for a communal effort at clarifying where and how Judaism differs. But it is not just a matter of ten-point policy recommendations, which other correspondents reprove me for not having supplied. S.C. Yuter's proposal, for instance—that the community broadcast the news about the higher rate of divorce among those who intermarry—can be only one small part of a far larger educational enterprise. (Incidentally, Mr. Yuter's data seem dubious; if nearly two-thirds of intermarriages really did come to an end within five years, the entire problem would soon go away on its own.)

More than tactical changes, the Jewish community needs to reassess its relationship to the larger culture. In particular, as noted by Rabbis Gellman and Listfield, and also by Ronald Gruen, the community has failed to create embracing institutions for young Jews, including teenagers, collegians, graduate students, and single adults. A range of such programs would not only, as Rabbi Listfield writes, help make Judaism "accessible to young people on the threshold of making their life commitments" but might also begin to reverse the destructive syndrome that prompts many young people to drop out of Jewish life altogether between their bar or bat mitzvah and the birth of their own children.

Finally, I share the prayer of Donald Feldstein, a wise and experienced communal leader. But as I am sure he would agree, the community's losses will continue to mount unless action is taken to challenge mistaken assumptions and fatal illusions like those informing much of the current discussion of intermarriage.

The GOP

TO THE EDITOR

In his article, "Bush and the Republican Future" [March], Daniel Casse ar-

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gues that "there is no denying that the GOP has indeed become a party in decline" and that the Reagan coalition has "fallen apart."

The Republican party and the conservative movement have heard similar predictions of pending division and collapse since 1980, when outsiders first noticed that Ronald Reagan was nominated and elected by a modern Republican party leading a new Center-Right coalition. In the beginning, the Reagan coalition operated only at the presidential level. It was not until 1984 that a majority of the Republican caucus in the House was "Reaganite," and not until 1994 that a majority of the Senate Republicans looked to Reagan rather than Nixon or Rockefeller as their model.

For twenty years the Reagan coalition has grown and strengthened. Some looked at the Center-Right coalition and saw two or three factions—economic conservatives, social conservatives, and foreign-policy conservatives—that would inevitably fight among themselves and divide. But the Reagan coalition has now won four national congressional elections and defeated a sitting Vice President at a time of peace and prosperity.

Why? Critics of the Reagan coalition misunderstand the nature of it. The modern Republican party and Center-Right coalition comprise individuals who, on the issue that makes them politically active, want one thing from the central government: to be left alone. Think of gun-owners, taxpayers, property-owners, home-schoolers, people of faith who wish to raise their children without the government tossing prophylactics at them, the self-employed, and the growing investor class. They do not want other people's time, money, or approbation. It is a low-maintenance coalition.

In 2000, Patrick J. Buchanan, Gary Bauer, and John McCain offered to form a different coalition. They were rejected. These would-be leaders looked at the polls—as Mr. Casse does—and found divisions on the Right. But those "divisions" are on secondary and tertiary issues. Many gun-owners, for example, are hostile to trade with China, and Buchanan and Bauer tried to attract their support. But gun-owners vote on gun issues, while Republicans for whom international trade is the primary "leave me alone" issue are pro-free trade—and so is the party. Intensity trumps mere preference.

All parts of the "leave us alone" coalition are growing. Americans who own more than $5,000 in stock are 18 percent more Republican than Democrat, and ownership of shares has grown from 20 percent of Americans in 1980 to more than 50 percent today. Conversely, there are 25 million Americans over the age of 70 who came of age during the period of Roosevelt statism. They voted by a margin of 51 to 43 percent for Gore over Bush. Every year, 2.5 million of them pass away—an annual loss to the Democrats of 200,000 voters.

Daniel Casse should cheer up.

GROVER NORQUIST
President
Americans for Tax Reform
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Daniel Casse's claim that the GOP has "become a party in decline" is simply false. The Republicans have established themselves as the governing party of the country and have not been in a stronger position since the 1920's. The GOP not only controls the House, Senate, Presidency, and federal judiciary but also dominates at the state level, a very significant fact in light of the state legislatures' control of congressional reapportionment in response to the 2000 census.

Consider Florida, where two House seats are to be added. In 1990 Democrats controlled the entire state government, but today Republicans hold both houses of the legislature and the office of the governor. Two more House seats are also to be added for Texas. There too the state government was controlled by Democrats in 1990; now Republicans hold one house of the legislature and the governorship. In other states as well, including New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, and Oklahoma, Republicans have the power to control or to influence reapportionment. As a result, the GOP is likely to make significant gains in the next election. Arguably, we are entering a period of lasting Republican control of the House.

SUSAN JORDAN
Los Angeles, California

DANIEL CASSE writes:

I have always admired Grover Norquist's cheerfulness about conservative coalition politics, but I do not share his analysis of the challenges that now face the Republican party. As my article made clear, I am not a critic of the Reagan coalition. I just do not believe that the issues that once held it together are sufficient to ensure large Republican majorities.

This does not require abandoning the Republican base. So long as President Bush and other Republicans do not become apostates on lower taxes, stronger defense, local control, and the other issues that Mr. Norquist mentions, "leave us alone" voters will remain firmly in the Republican camp. But merely main-

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taining the loyalty of your base is not a viable strategy for a party that won the last election by the smallest of margins.

Since 1994, the GOP has been losing seats in the House, has lost an outright majority in the Senate, and has seen no gain in the number of Republican governors. If Bush is going to reverse this trend (and expand the influence of conservative ideas), he needs to set the national agenda on health care, education, and Social Security—issues that simply were not part of past conservative coalitions.

For that reason, the gains made by the GOP in state elections that Susan Jordan presents do not impress me. It does not mean much if Republicans control state houses but cannot control the ideas that shape policy.

Partisans

TO THE EDITOR:

Though I largely agree with Jay Lefkowitz's view that "Jewish voters seem as frozen as ever in their twin predilections for liberal positions and Democratic candidates" ["Does the Jewish Vote Count?," March], I would like to sound an optimistic note.

Despite the fact that the Democratic party offered a Jew as a national nominee for the first time, the Gore-Lieberman ticket garnered just 1 percent more of the Jewish vote than the Clinton-Gore ticket in 1996. Put another way, Bush-Cheney got 20 percent of the Jewish vote—and more than that among the Orthodox—even though most observers thought the Republicans would be lucky to break out of the single digits, as they barely did among black voters. Moreover, recent polls have indicated that an increasing percentage of Jews under age thirty-five identify themselves as Republicans.

These facts suggest that there is a floor of support for Republicans among Jews and that the growth of the Orthodox segment of the community, combined with certain generational trends, might help that base of support expand. Much will depend on how the current Republican President and Congress address issues of serious concern to Jews, including Israel, education policy, and church-state relations, as well as whether moderates within the Democratic party succeed in keeping the debates over these issues from veering to the extreme Left.

NATHAN DIAMENT
Director
Institute for Public Affairs
Orthodox Union
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Jay Lefkowitz's attempt to parse the Jewish presidential vote was as enjoyable as any other in the long line of COMMENTARY pieces on this subject over the years.

All the same, I really think that the overwhelmingly Democratic tendency of the Jewish vote comes down to the fact that the typical Jewish voter is a sixty-year-old irreligious urban or suburban female who associates the Republican party with evangelical Christianity. (Incidentally, I also think this explains why so many Jews were repelled by Jimmy Carter, whose personal manner and religion differentiated him from other Democratic presidential candidates in recent memory.)

Jews may be rich and successful and culturally assimilated, but they still want to feel as though they could socialize with their presidential candidate. They are not so much ideological as terminally sentimental in their political preferences.

SETH A. HALPERN
Scarsdale, New York

A Small Shelf

TO THE EDITOR:

Terry Teachout's writings on music are of such high quality that it is all too easy to take for granted his skillful effort to introduce a note of professionalism into the examination of jazz music and history ["Jazz & Its Explainers," February]. His dissection of the ten-part PBS series by Ken Burns and Geoffrey Ward and of the book based on that presumptive cultural event merits reading by all those who wonder why the useful literature on jazz occupies such a small shelf.

One irritant that Mr. Teachout might have added about the series and not a few other ostensible hagiographic and historical writings on jazz is the fixation on the issue of drugs. Not a few fine artists are mentioned in passing for their presumed habits with hardly a peep about their contributions to jazz as such.

Since Mr. Teachout does point to the small shelf of good books on jazz, it might be useful to extend the accolades to the even smaller list of publishers and editors with a commitment to and feeling for jazz as an art form with a history of its own. I have in mind Sheldon Meyer, whose work over roughly 40 years at Oxford University Press set a standard of editorial integrity that stands in stark contrast to the commercial chatter that Mr. Teachout criticizes.

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

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Commentary
June 2001

Funding the Faithful: Why Bush Is Right

Leslie Lenkowsky

On the campaign trail last year, George W. Bush staked a large part of his claim to "compassionate conservatism" on the belief that a range of social services now run by secular agencies could be more effectively administered by religious groups—groups that had shown the ability, as he declared on the stump, "to save and change lives." So it was no surprise that one of Bush's first major initiatives as President was to open a new White House office devoted to lending support to "faith-based" organizations whose services include things like family counseling, operating homeless shelters, and the rehabilitation of criminals.

As a practical matter, the plan outlined by the President in January did indeed hold out the promise of significant new resources for such organizations. It proposed, in the first place, a number of changes in the tax code aimed at spurring private giving, the most notable being a measure to allow far more Americans to deduct charitable contributions from their taxes. More ambitiously, the administration declared its intention to make faith-based organizations full participants in the multibillion-dollar competition for federal social-service grants and contracts. As the White House made clear, the first order of business for John J. DiIulio, Jr., the University of Pennsylvania social scientist appointed to head the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, would be to conduct a comprehensive review of the laws and regulations that have so far prevented such groups from taking a "seat at the table" alongside their secular counterparts.

For all the fanfare, and controversy, with which these ideas were presented and received by the press, their recent history extends back to well before the Bush campaign. In 1996, a bipartisan coalition in Congress had added to the welfare-reform law a provision called "charitable choice," which allowed religious groups to use government funds for helping welfare recipients. Similar provisions were later included in three other social-service programs, and the Clinton administration even chose a Catholic priest to oversee "community and interfaith partnerships" at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Nonetheless, the bureaucratic obstacles to the participation of faith-based organizations remained formidable, and few groups felt that their services were in fact welcome—a situation that Bush is plainly determined to reverse.

That determination, entailing as it does a real and far-reaching transformation in how government provides social services, is what has brought down upon the Bush proposals a remarkably broad chorus of criticism. As expected, groups like the American Civil Liberties Union, which have long opposed any sort of public support for religious institutions, have registered their objections. But so

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too, and quite unexpectedly, have a range of religious organizations and leaders, including many of the Christian conservatives whose support was crucial to Bush's election. None of this has stopped the White House and its allies in Congress from moving forward with legislation to promote faith-based programs—and indeed, according to a recent poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a remarkable three out of four Americans support the idea in principle. But just months after being introduced, the centerpiece of the new administration's domestic policy now faces considerably dimmer prospects.

THE ARGUMENTS that have been made against the Bush plan fall under several broad headings. The taxonomy is complicated somewhat by the fact that under certain of these rubrics, attacks have come from both the Left and the Right, though of course for different reasons.

The first objection is that government support for faith-based organizations violates the First Amendment's stricture against the "establishment" of religion, breaching the "wall of separation" (the phrase is Thomas Jefferson's) between church and state. As civil libertarians see it, the Bush administration's proposals would put the government in the untenable position of picking and choosing among religious groups, a sure invitation, in their view, to favoritism as well as to religious strife.

For their part, leaders of the religious Right have expressed precisely the opposite fear: they worry that the government will find itself obliged to support groups whose beliefs and practices are outside the American mainstream. Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition has said that the Bush plan would open a "Pandora's box," and the Reverend Jerry Falwell has singled out Islam as a faith that should not receive public funds because, he has alleged, it preaches hatred. Nor are they alone in these concerns. Half of those surveyed by Pew are opposed to seeing government funds wind up in the coffers of mosques, Buddhist temples, or the Church of Scientology.

The second broad set of objections has to do with the effect that public support would have on religious charities themselves. As the White House has emphasized—and as existing "charitable choice" laws already mandate—only the *non*religious services provided by a faith-based organization would be eligible for direct government funding, and clients may not be proselytized or required to take part in religious activities.

But according to Marvin Olasky, a journalism professor at the University of Texas whose writings were a primary inspiration for "compassionate conservatism," imposing this sort of divide is neither possible nor desirable. Many faith-based organizations, he recently observed, citing Teen Challenge, a well-known and avowedly Christian program for juvenile drug and alcohol abusers, "cannot separate counseling and evangelism. Evangelism *is* [their] counseling." In Olasky's view, forcing such groups to refrain from religious activities essentially reduces them to secular charities—and thereby greatly diminishes their prospects for success.

Thirdly, liberal critics have charged that if faith-based organizations receive government support, they will not to be held to the standards of accountability that apply to other publicly funded entities. Of special concern in this regard is discrimination in hiring. Religious groups, it is feared, will not only exclude workers who do not share their faith but will make other supposedly invidious distinctions, as happened recently in Kentucky, where (in a much-publicized case) a Baptist-run home for at-risk children fired an employee upon discovering she was a lesbian.

Under this same heading of accountability, yet another concern has been raised: that faith-based organizations are not equipped to handle the fiscal and institutional demands that go along with receiving government money. A study conducted in Indianapolis, where a prototype of the Bush administration's program has been in operation for several years, found that religious charities did not compare well in this respect to their secular counterparts: their proposals were poorly written, lacked clear budgets and plans for evaluation, and did not include properly credentialed staff. Such lax practices also appear to be responsible in part for instances in which religious groups have defrauded the government, the most notorious recent case—because the perpetrators were among President Clinton's last-minute pardons—being the involvement of four Hasidic Jews from New York State in a bogus religious school that received federal money for student aid.

A final and potentially decisive objection to expanding "charitable choice" is that faith-based organizations simply do not work. At the very least, there is no empirical evidence demonstrating that they are more effective than existing federal grantees. As Byron R. Johnson, a social scientist at the University of Pennsylvania who has tried to measure the influence of religion on social problems, recently told the *New York Times*, the new White House office promoting the faith-based idea has been constructed "out of anecdotes."

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NONE OF these varied criticisms is trivial, and few of them can be answered with perfect assurance. Nevertheless, and even taken together, they do not constitute a telling case against the Bush administration's plan for involving religious groups more deeply in the provision of services to our neediest citizens.

The constitutional issues raised by public funding for faith-based groups are in many respects the easiest to deal with. As has often been pointed out, Jefferson's idea of a "wall of separation" between church and state first appeared in a Supreme Court decision that *upheld* a degree of state support for a religious institution. In the 1947 case of *Everson* v. *Board of Education*, Justice Hugo Black ruled that the First Amendment did not prevent New Jersey from allowing students at parochial schools to travel on publicly financed buses. Since then, the courts have fairly consistently held that faith-based organizations may receive government aid so long as it is used for legitimate public purposes—like transporting school children or providing them with computer instruction—and does not serve primarily to advance religion.

What the Bush plan aims to do is nothing more than to bring the administration of social services into line with this constitutional principle. After all, since the advent of the Great Society in the 1960's, public officials have increasingly relied on the nonprofit sector to carry out programs for the disadvantaged. It is estimated that the country's private charities now receive more than a third of their income for social services, health care, and education from public sources. With the government already handing out billions of dollars to secular social-service organizations—including the secular affiliates of the major religious denominations—the real transgression against the Constitution's promise of neutrality would seem to consist of barring qualified faith-based groups from receiving such funds.

Whether these groups are in fact "qualified" will depend, the Bush administration has insisted, solely on their capacity to provide needed services. That this standard runs the risk of placing public funds into the hands of cults and religious extremists cannot be denied. But the risk has been greatly exaggerated. Aside from the non-Judeo-Christian religions that seem to cause anxiety for Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and, alas, many other Americans, the fact is that few truly objectionable groups are likely to accept the restrictions that will apply to publicly funded religious charities. One somehow doubts, for instance, that the Nation of Islam will be prepared to cooperate with federal rules for financial reporting, much less the requirements that it refrain from religious recruitment in its social services and accept clients regardless of their beliefs.

A MORE legitimate concern is that those very requirements, themselves made necessary by the First Amendment, will rob faith-based groups of whatever advantages they possess *by virtue of* their religious message.

One possible solution to this difficulty is for such groups simply to forgo public support, relying instead on the higher level of charitable giving that the Bush administration hopes to generate with changes in the tax code. Unfortunately, however, these changes are likely to make only a modest difference. The most significant of them, allowing the 70 percent of taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions to get credit for their charitable gifts, would increase annual donations, according to the most optimistic estimates, by $14 billion—no small amount, but only 10 percent more than what Americans already gave to charity last year. (The actual figure is apt to be even smaller, since many people already give without being able to claim a deduction.) Moreover, to judge by current patterns of giving, less than half of this increase would go to religious groups, and only a fraction of that to their social-service activities.

Nor can much help be expected from the nation's foundations and corporations, which—with notable exceptions like the Lilly Endowment and Wal-Mart—have long been reluctant to support faith-based groups. In 1998, only some 2 percent of the billions of dollars given by the nation's 1,000 largest foundations went to religiously affiliated institutions, and much of that was earmarked for hospitals and universities. As for corporate America, six of the country's ten largest businesses, according to a recent survey by the Capital Research Center, "ban or restrict" donations to religious groups; AT&T's contributions, for instance, are exclusively reserved, as its website announces, for organizations that are "nonsectarian and nondenominational." The Bush administration's initiative, by providing new legitimacy to faith-based organizations, may cause a few big givers to reconsider, but it is unlikely to shake the profound wariness toward religious charities that one finds among the heirs, trustees, and professional staffers who now dominate the philanthropic world.

A more promising solution, as Marvin Olasky and others have suggested (and as the White House

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seems prepared to accept), would be to rely on vouchers to fund those faith-based social services, like Teen Challenge, whose very essence is religious. Such "pervasively sectarian" institutions may receive public aid, the Supreme Court and a number of lower courts have suggested, when secular options are also available and when the decision to participate is a private one, made by individuals. Though this principle remains in dispute—most notably with respect to school choice—vouchers still represent the best option for including those charities that depend most directly on the power of faith. The real question will be whether these groups can avoid the sorts of rules and restrictions that have followed in the wake of federal voucher programs in areas like Medicare, Medicaid, and financial aid for higher education.

Where Olasky and other conservative critics of the Bush plan go wrong is in suggesting that the *only* faith-based organizations worth supporting are those that make religious activities an integral part of the services they provide. This is not the case. At root, what makes a group faith-based is the religious commitment of those who run it and their devotion—even if through exclusively secular means—to improving the lives of the most troubled and disadvantaged members of their community.

Many such groups are no doubt also interested in winning converts, and should be able to continue doing so independently, with their own resources and on their own time. All that is required is recognizing the difference between saving souls and meeting more mundane needs. That faith-based groups will inevitably fail to respect any such distinction was the burden of a recent article in the *New York Times*. In El Salvador, the paper reported, officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) felt they had to withdraw the government contract of an evangelical Christian group, Samaritan's Purse, that had come to provide earthquake relief. The reason: its members had conducted prayer sessions before showing Salvadorans how to build new homes.

What the story actually demonstrated, however, was something else entirely: that faith-based groups already make a conscientious effort to obey federal guidelines. AID officials may not have been "comfortable" with the religious activities of Samaritan's Purse, as they told the *Times*, but the money for the prayer sessions had come from the group's own funds, and the participation of the Salvadorans was in no way a condition of their receiving help.

As the Bush administration recognizes—and as religious charities themselves often complain—the rules governing such arrangements could stand some elaboration. No one thinks it will be easy to establish clear boundaries between secular and spiritual activities, but the federal bureaucracy has already had to wrestle with defining these gray areas—it is hardly an insurmountable task.

For their part, faith-based groups are justified to some extent in their worry that government money will come with strings attached—it always does—and may interfere with their separate pursuit of religious ends. Here too, however, the record is largely encouraging. According to a survey of nonprofit organizations done in the mid-1990's by Stephen V. Monsma of Pepperdine University, only 13 percent of the faith-based groups that received public funds felt any pressure to alter their religious practices. Among those most committed to spreading their faith, the figure was somewhat higher, at 22 percent, but the vast majority reported no problems, and relatively few had limited their own religious activities to avoid government interference.

THIS BRINGS us to the concern that faith-based organizations will flout other government standards, and thus avoid public accountability. Here, too, there is reassurance in how such groups currently operate. Indeed, the problems most often cited to show their tendency to defy public regulation often show just the opposite.

Consider the case of the lesbian fired by the Baptist children's home in Kentucky, a charity that receives three-quarters of its budget from the state. She claims that the home considered her sexual orientation inconsistent with "Christian values"—something clearly impermissible under current law, which allows faith-based organizations to consider the religious beliefs of an employee only when they bear a "bona fide" relationship to job performance. But the home sees things differently. The woman was dismissed, it claims, not for her beliefs but because "homosexual behavior is not in the best interest of anyone, especially sexually abused and confused children and youth."

The courts will decide which side is right in this case, but the very fact that it is being litigated demonstrates that, far from escaping accountability, faith-based organizations—like any other government contractor—must abide by the regulations. The same lesson is to be drawn from the recent case of the Hasidic Jews and their bogus religious school: though public attention focused on their having won a pardon from Bill Clinton, the more important point as far as the faith-based initiative

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is concerned is that they had been convicted for their crimes.

For most religious charities, especially in the inner cities, the question is not so much whether they are willing to comply with government regulations as whether they are able to do so. Generally, these small organizations lack the resources of better-heeled charities, everything from computerized accounting systems to professional legal services. But these are not likely to be permanent defects, and the administration has already proposed establishing a pool of money, funded both publicly and privately, to help pay for better training and other forms of assistance. One can also expect that more experienced nonprofit groups would share their expertise.

Even so, it should be emphasized that modestly endowed religious organizations are hardly alone in finding it difficult to navigate the rules imposed by public grants and contracts. Even more sophisticated charities complain about this. Among the chief problems, according to a Clinton administration task force, are excessive paperwork, "duplicative and sometimes contradictory" requirements, and long delays in obtaining approval and funding. As the task force concluded, streamlining this process would benefit all charities, religious or otherwise. Of particular importance to faith-based organizations will be the elimination of arbitrary rules that allow, for example, the use of professional therapy but not pastoral counseling.

BUT THE real question is whether any of this will ultimately make a difference in confronting the nation's most serious social problems. That there is little research *proving* the effectiveness of faith-based groups is not news to their more informed advocates. Even John DiIulio, the head of the White House's initiative, has tried to distance himself from the more extravagant claims of enthusiasts. As he wrote shortly before taking office, "we do not really know whether these faith-based programs . . . outperform their secular counterparts, how they compare to one another, or whether, in any case, it is the 'faith' in 'faith-based' that mainly determines any observed difference."

There are some things, however, we do know about faith-based charities, starting with the fact of their near-ubiquity. As the sociologist Mark Chaves discovered in a 1998 survey, 57 percent of religious congregations are engaged in providing social services in some fashion. A more recent investigation, done by the Hartford Seminary, puts the figure even higher, at 85 percent of churches, synagogues, mosques, and other "spiritual communities." Studies of particular cities like Philadelphia have found similarly high rates of congregational involvement in helping the needy.

For another thing, it is clear that, at least in the eyes of those who keep them in business by funding them, many existing faith-based groups have done exemplary work. In March, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation—another in the handful of major philanthropies that support religious groups—announced a $100-million expansion of a program called "Faith-in-Action," which for almost twenty years has been organizing volunteers from religious congregations to care for the elderly, sick, and disabled. Still another success story is Alcoholics Anonymous, whose faith-based program, predicated on the willingness of participants to call upon the help of a "higher power," receives substantial public support, especially in the nation's prisons.

In a broader vein, a number of studies have shown that belonging to a religious group or praying regularly has a positive impact on health, family stability, and other aspects of personal well-being. Couples who worship together have a better chance of staying married; and young, inner-city black men who attend church are more likely to be employed. Even more suggestive is research done in the 1970's by the late sociologist James Coleman, who found that low-income children, regardless of their religious background, performed considerably better in the tradition-minded environment of Catholic schools than in the local public schools.

There is evidence as well that faith-based programs are particularly attractive to the most troubled recipients of social services. A study of Indiana's "FaithWorks" program, which allows welfare recipients to get help from religious charities, found that those opting for such charities over their secular alternatives came from more distressed family situations and had deeper personal crises, including serious health problems and homelessness. What these more disadvantaged people found at faith-based organizations, the study concluded, was a measure of emotional and spiritual support that other charities, focused as they were on material aid, did not provide.

None of this, needless to say, makes an airtight case. When it comes to the better behavior of churchgoers, for example, the key factor may be not so much going to church as being the *sort of person* who chooses to go to church. (Similar charges were made against Coleman's research on Catholic schools, though he controlled for this possibility in

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various ways.) Indeed, it is the lack of reliable information on the efficacy of faith-based groups that has led DiIulio and others to insist that evaluation and, to the extent possible, rigorous research play an important role in the President's initiative.

But it is easy to get carried away by the demand for hard social-scientific evidence. Such evidence is notoriously difficult to obtain—complex public programs being anything but controlled experiments—and, more to the point, it has never been demanded of the secular nonprofit groups that for decades have served as the chief agents of the American welfare state. What faith-based organizations bring to the debate, at least at this early point, is not a track record of proven achievement but a great deal of promise—and an old, if now seemingly revolutionary, idea about the roots of genuine social change.

IN THE end, what is distinctive about the President's plan is not its reliance on proxies to provide the federal government's social services—this, as not a few worried conservatives have observed, was a key innovation of the Great Society. What is distinctive, rather, is its unabashedly moral tone. That tone is a throwback to an era when the nation's charities were concerned not just about the material circumstances of those they helped but about their character and behavior as well.

Liberals may dismiss such notions as nostalgia for a tradition of American philanthropy that gave us poorhouses and orphanages; but liberals, who have their own sins to live down when it comes to the policies they have sponsored, are not in the best position to mock. Above all, as Myron Magnet writes in introducing a recent collection of essays from *City Journal*, that older tradition emphasized "the attitudes of self-reliance and personal responsibility," and the need to spark "an inner change in the recipient."* Nor, in taking this approach to the immigrant underclass of a century ago, were reformers indifferent to wider social and economic conditions. But, as Joel Schwartz observes in his illuminating study, *Fighting Poverty with Virtue*,† they did evaluate any proposed public policy in terms of its tendency to reinforce behavior that would allow the needy to succeed on their own, a task at which the liberal social policies of the last decades notoriously failed.

The most visible modern descendants of this older tradition of charity are faith-based organizations, especially those that operate through the black churches of the country's big cities. For them, the answers to poverty, crime, and addiction lie not in the ministrations of social workers and government bureaucrats but in old-fashioned virtues like diligence, self-control, sobriety, and, of course, faith. It is these groups that are most eager to win government support for their efforts: in a recent survey, some two-thirds of black congregations signaled an interest in public dollars, as compared to just over a quarter of predominantly white churches.

For these financially strained organizations, already deeply involved in our inner cities, a far-reaching expansion of "charitable choice" would be a figurative if not a literal godsend, allowing them to influence their communities as never before. Conservatives will continue to fret about the specter of heavy-handed regulation, and liberals about public funds going to groups that speak freely of vice, sin, and salvation. But when the dust settles, we may have moved a step closer to restoring religious groups to their rightful place in the public square—and significant numbers of truly disadvantaged Americans might at last receive assistance more useful than yet another handout.

* *What Makes Charity Work*. Ivan R. Dee, 242 pp., $24.95.
† Indiana University Press, 376 pp., $39.95.

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Too Darn Hot?

Kevin A. Shapiro

NATIVES OF Hawaii, inured by more than a thousand years of island life to the vagaries of the weather and the seas, have a somewhat elliptical saying: "the mists are those that know of a storm upon the water." It can be taken to mean that those nearest to something are the first to become aware of what is happening to it. Using similar reasoning, perhaps, many environmentalists today regard the small islands that dot the Pacific as a sort of planetary weathervane, outcrops of flora and fauna that are sensitive indicators of large-scale shifts in the ecological balance of the earth. If these islands are already beginning to buckle under the stresses imposed on the planet by human activity, it is a sign that we must act quickly lest catastrophe result.

An alarming presentation of this argument can be found in *Rising Waters: Global Warming and the Fate of the Pacific Islands*, an hour-long documentary that aired on PBS this past April on Earth Day. *Rising Waters* paints a picture of island nations on the veritable brink of ruin: homes destroyed in the wake of storms or threatened by eroding shorelines, churchyards and cropfields inundated by the rising sea, and shoals of once-vivid coral bleached by overheated waters. On camera, fishermen complain of poor hauls; a Samoan environmentalist laments the looming disappearance of his cultural heritage; Teburoro Tito, the president of tiny Kiribati, speaks glumly of the possibility that the entire populace of his cluster of atolls will have to be relocated.

What is causing this potentially immense disruption? *Rising Waters* mentions several factors, including seasonal weather fluctuations and overdevelopment, but ultimately it places most of the blame on a long chain of processes at the end of which is: global warming. The nature of this menace is well known and has been widely discussed. Increases in the industrial emission of gases like carbon dioxide (CO_2), it is said, have caused the atmosphere to absorb infrared radiation that would otherwise be reflected back into outer space. The resulting "greenhouse effect" lifts the average temperature of the earth's surface. Among the many consequences are rising sea levels caused by the melting of the polar ice caps and increases in the frequency and intensity of storm activity.

Though *Rising Waters* offers the disclaimer that the earth's climate is a complex and somewhat unpredictable system—"we don't know how it behaves completely," says Fred MacKenzie, a professor of oceanography at the University of Hawaii—its overarching message is that unregulated CO_2 emissions have already begun to heat the planet to dangerous levels. To forestall further warming, we must cut those emissions globally by as much as 80 percent over the next several decades. Alas, as *Rising Waters* notes with a hint of impending doom, the prospects for such a cut are not auspicious.

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ON THIS last point, the documentary is certainly correct. Talks in the Hague on implementing the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement aimed at reducing the CO_2 emissions of industrial nations to pre-1990 levels by the year 2012, collapsed in December, in the last month of Bill Clinton's presidency. By mid-March, the Bush administration had announced it would not seek to regulate the CO_2 emissions of power plants, provoking an outcry from environmentalists and angering European leaders who maintain (in the words of Dutch prime minister Wim Kok) that the United States is acting "irresponsibly." Two weeks later, President Bush declared that it made "no sense" for the United States to pursue implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. European governments, positively livid, dispatched an emergency delegation to Washington, but to no avail; they now plan to assemble an international coalition aimed at "shaming" the United States into reconsidering its stance. Another round of talks on Kyoto will be held in Bonn this July, and the conflict over global warming is certain to deepen in the months and years ahead.

Against this backdrop, *Rising Waters* can only serve to underscore the now almost incessant warnings about the disaster that awaits us if we fail to change our profligate energy habits. Global warming has already been blamed for ecological hazards ranging in scale from disruptions in the migration patterns of butterflies and declining amphibian populations to extreme weather events, droughts, and food shortages in farflung portions of the globe. And the dangers that lie ahead are said to be far worse, if not horrific: famine brought on by widespread agricultural failure, an increase in epidemics of infectious disease, even mass extinctions of animal and human populations.

If anything remotely resembling this scenario is likely, it is not hard to see why so many Europeans, and with them many Americans, are apoplectic over President Bush's determination to scrap the Kyoto deal, the fruit of years of intense multinational discussions among lawmakers, economists, scientists, and environmentalists. Senator Joseph Lieberman has even promised a congressional investigation of the President's environmental decisions, declaring that they "ignore the public interest and defy common sense."

IS LIEBERMAN right? There are indeed many things about the global-warming debate that "ignore the public interest and defy common sense." But the decision to abandon the Kyoto Protocol is not one of them.

In a sense, the decision was hardly even newsworthy. The agreement has been effectively dead—at least as far as the United States is concerned—since shortly after it was negotiated in 1997. For no sooner did Clinton's negotiators return from Japan than the Senate voted 95-0 to oppose ratification of any treaty that would impose significant burdens on our national economy and that lacked "specific scheduled commitments" for emissions reductions in what are now known as "developing" countries. As Kyoto has never been amended to address these concerns, it is perplexing that any policymaker could have continued to regard the accord as viable.

Indeed, far more inscrutable than President Bush's final rejection of Kyoto is the vast amount of rhetorical and diplomatic effort that has been and continues to be expended on the agreement's behalf. Even apart from the unanimous vote in the Senate, there are serious questions about whether the provisions of the treaty could ever be implemented and enforced, and therefore about whether it really represents a workable mechanism for managing climate change.

From its very inception, as the analyst David G. Victor shows in a new monograph,* the Kyoto Protocol was a product of diplomatic wishful thinking. For one thing, the limits it called for on greenhouse gas emissions were draconian. Thus, by 2012 the United States would have been required to reduce CO_2 emissions to 7 percent below 1990 levels—a modest-sounding target until one considers that by the end of 1999, emissions were already 12 percent above 1990 levels and were continuing to rise. Compliance with Kyoto would therefore have required a likely cut of as much as 30 percent by the time the treaty took effect in 2008. Not only would this cost hundreds of billions of dollars in GDP but, because most greenhouse gases are released in the course of burning fossil fuels for energy, cutbacks on such a scale would deal a major blow to significant sectors of the U.S. economy—particularly electricity generation, which is already struggling mightily to keep pace with demand.

The agreement was also exceedingly inequitable. Russia, for example, would have been required only to freeze its emissions at 1990 levels; but because the Russian economy has contracted sharply since the collapse of the Soviet Union, its emissions are already far below target, and are unlikely to recover by 2008. Though it remains a significant industrial polluter, Moscow would thus be required to

* *The Collapse of the Kyoto Protocol and the Struggle to Slow Global Warming*. Princeton University Press, 178 pp., $19.95.

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do absolutely nothing. South Korea and Mexico, now formally considered "developed" countries (as defined by membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), have for their part also not agreed to curtail emissions.

At the same time, Kyoto sets no targets at all for the developing nations, though these countries will account for half the world's greenhouse gases by 2020. The two largest such nations, India and China, have refused outright to accept any limits on their emissions output.

In short, the Kyoto Protocol demands that the United States hobble its economy with drastic cuts in energy production, while Russia, India, China, and other nations enjoy the freedom to grow untrammeled. To deal with this gross imbalance, a number of observers have proposed amending the agreement. One proposal involves altering the way emissions are accounted for—for example, by permitting industrialized countries to earn "credits" if they maintain or create carbon sinks, i.e., forest and soil zones that absorb CO_2. Another alternative would be to allow trading, whereby industrialized countries could buy the right to emit carbon dioxide from those nations whose emissions are below targeted levels.

Both of these ideas have their attractions for the United States, but they also entail immense practical and political difficulties. On the positive side, the U.S. might offset its Kyoto obligations by counting carbon sinks that resulted from intentional changes in land-use policy. If, in addition, it were permissible to count those resulting from unintentional changes (like the spontaneous reforestation of abandoned agricultural lands), we might no longer be a net emitter. But an amendment of this sort would almost certainly prove unacceptable to Europe and Japan, which, unlike the U.S., have limited capacity to plant new forests. A more fundamental problem is that the Kyoto Protocol provides no standard definitions, methods, or data for quantifying the absorption of CO_2 by trees and soils, making it easy for nations to cheat by claiming credit for carbon sinks that are short-lived or even nonexistent.

Emissions trading is beset with its own difficulties. The present terms of the Kyoto Protocol would seem to award countries with low baselines—like Russia—a windfall in fictitious credits, the sale of which would result in no reduction in global emissions whatsoever. David Victor has correctly spelled out the political implications of any such arrangement: "No Western legislature will ratify a deal that merely enriches Russia and Ukraine while doing nothing to control emissions and slow global warming."

If the most widely discussed ways of amending the Kyoto agreement are infeasible, what then? Policy analysts like Victor continue to hold out hope that the Bush administration will develop a coherent approach to global warming—perhaps a modified trading system combined with international taxes on CO_2 emissions and supplemented by investments in new technology. As for the Bush administration, the President himself has spoken of global warming as a "serious problem," and the U.S. will be participating in the upcoming talks in Bonn with the hope of finding a workable alternative to Kyoto.

The operative assumption here, of course, is that man-made climate change is a real phenomenon, and that averting catastrophe requires doing something about it, and soon. As this assumption has increasingly come to be taken for granted, disputing it has become commensurately perilous, especially for politicians. According to a 1997 poll taken for the World Wildlife Federation, two-thirds of American voters regard global warming as a "serious threat" and support an international agreement to cut greenhouse-gas emissions, even if this comes at some economic cost. A full three-quarters endorse the view that "the only scientists who do not believe global warming is happening are paid by big oil, coal, and gas companies to find the results that will protect business interests." Only 15 percent accept the statement that "scientists disagree among themselves" about the extent of the coming danger.

Clearly, climate change is no longer an issue up for grabs. Even if the public could be persuaded that the Kyoto Protocol would be disastrous for the U.S. economy and is the result of junk diplomacy, it would be far harder for a politician to make the case that the research behind Kyoto is junk science, too. But much of it is.

Let us return for a moment to those Pacific islands. It is undeniable that they have been buffeted by a series of severe storms in the past decade, accompanied by unusually intense episodes of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon, a periodic fluctuation in sea temperature in the tropical Pacific that has been observed since the last century. What is not clear is whether these have anything to do with global warming.

Storm activity in the Pacific varies from year to year; 1998 saw an above-average incidence of trop-

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ical storms, while 1997 was comparatively quiet. The cause of this variation remains unknown. The ENSO phenomenon is not well understood, and it is not predicted by any model of climate change. A United Nations body called the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has rightly observed that while many small island states fear that "global warming will lead to changes in the character and pattern of tropical cyclones (i.e., hurricanes and typhoons)," this fear is not confirmed by the most recent research. Rather, "model projections suggest no clear trend, so it is not possible to state whether the frequency, intensity, or distribution of tropical storms and cyclones will change."

And what of rising waters? In 1980, climatologists predicted that global warming would melt the polar icecaps, causing sea levels to rise more than 25 feet over the course of the next century. Such an event would undoubtedly be disastrous not only for the Pacific islands but also for densely populated coastal regions in all parts of the world.

Fortunately for those of us in Boston, Miami, New York, and Los Angeles, the deluge failed even to begin to materialize. According to the latest data, the polar icecaps do not appear to be melting at all. The 2001 IPCC report discerns "no significant trends" in the extent of Antarctic sea-ice since 1978, when reliable satellite measurements began to be taken; nor, at the other pole, is there evidence from satellite records that the air above the Arctic has warmed substantially.

With the polar caps essentially intact, it does not come as a surprise that sea levels have risen only a paltry 2 millimeters per year in the mid-1990's—roughly the same rate observed over the past 100 years. Even the gloomiest doomsayers have been compelled to jettison the dire forecasts put forward in 1980. Under the *worst*-case scenario now envisioned by the IPCC, the oceans should rise no more than a foot over the next century, not nearly enough to pose a major threat. And this forecast is in turn based on the assumption that sea levels will increase by approximately 5 millimeters per year, *give or take* 3 millimeters—in other words, the rate of rise may not change at all.

As for the climate itself, despite the alarmed rhetoric from so many quarters, we do not know for certain that it is even changing in significant ways. It is an established fact that the earth's climate has warmed slightly over the past century. Average temperatures near the surface have risen since 1900 and are now probably higher than they have been at any time in the past 600 to 1,000 years. But that statement more or less exhausts the scientific consensus. On every other important question—what the major causes of global warming are, what its effects will be, whether we should try to prevent it and, if so, how—there is considerable uncertainty.

MOST OF what we "know" about the earth's future is derived from enormously sophisticated computer models that utilize millions of parameters to simulate the earth's climate. These models are still far from reliable. The editors of *Nature*, arguably the world's most prestigious scientific journal, pointed out on March 15 that "the accuracy of any model depends significantly on the quality of the underlying raw data." But the quality of the data being used for climate prediction, they go on to state, is "patchy." For example, it is not at all easy to measure the amount of sunlight absorbed by the atmosphere or reflected by its surface back into space—and yet this one key parameter alone might (or might not) account for six times the amount of energy that would be added to the climate system by the doubling of atmospheric CO_2. Similar uncertainties attend other crucial variables like the impact of differing degrees of cloud cover and water vapor.

Given the room for error, it should come as no surprise that climate-prediction models have racked up an exceedingly poor track record over the years. According to those models, the average global temperature should have increased by at least 1 degree centigrade since the beginning of the 20th century, when industrial emissions of greenhouse gases first began to rise. But the best available measurements indicate that the average global temperature has increased by only 0.5 degrees in 100 years, and much of that increase occurred before 1940—too early in the century, in other words, to have been caused by a growth in CO_2 levels.

Contrary to the simulations, moreover, the marginal uptick in surface temperatures in the years since 1970 has not been accompanied by warming of the lower atmosphere (as we know from satellite data). A pair of recent papers in the journal *Science* attempts to account for this discrepancy by locating the missing heat in the oceans, a "discovery" trumpeted by the media as yet another blow to those who remain skeptical of global warming. But this was not a discovery at all, and was not based on any finding that whatever warming may have occurred has been caused by human activity. Rather, it was merely the product of "improved" models, which have their own "improved" assumptions and their own set of poorly understood parameters.

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In the face of such scientific shell-games, and in the face of the huge costs the United States has been asked to incur to combat a problem that may or may not exist, President Bush was certainly right to pull the plug on the Kyoto Protocol. But whether he will be able to stand firm against the torrent of criticism that has been unleashed against him remains an open question. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Bush administration's decision to abandon Kyoto "will have massively destructive consequences for the earth and its people." Although the IPCC has specifically rejected any direct linkage between today's local environmental perturbations and global warming, the Sierra Club is instructing its members that the apocalypse is upon us *now*, in the form of "heat waves, droughts, coastal flooding, and malaria outbreaks."

There are more narrowly partisan interests at play as well. "Democrats See Gold in Environment," ran the headline of a recent *New York Times* story describing how Bush's environmental decisions have galvanized activists in the Democratic party. Indeed, reports the *Times*, some party officials are positively "gleeful" at the political opportunities now opening up. One such official is evidently Senator Lieberman. Assuming Al Gore's mantle as the party's leading spokesman on matters environmental, Lieberman has called the decision to abandon Kyoto "flabbergasting," and is now invoking the specter of "sea levels [that] could swell up to 35 feet, potentially submerging millions of homes and coastal property."

That this is the same Joseph Lieberman who in 1997 joined 94 other Senators in voting to denounce the Kyoto Protocol suggests that when it comes to global warming we are indeed facing a rising tide—of hysteria, mixed with sheer political cynicism. As against these twin forces, it may seem hopelessly naïve to suggest that we would do better to focus on phasing out those greenhouse gases that can be eliminated at relatively low cost, like sulfur hexafluoride and perfluorocarbons, while adopting a wait-and-see attitude toward CO_2, secure in the knowledge that advances in technology and in the accuracy of prediction will allow us to address climate change more effectively and more cheaply in the future. Naïve it may be, but at present there is no basis in scientific evidence for more drastic action. All that is required is a politician tough enough and brave enough to say so.

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Growing Up Anglo-Jewish

John Gross

In my youth—I was born in 1935—every self-respecting Jewish family in England had at least one Uncle Morrie. My own family was no exception, but then it would have been very surprising if it had been. We were mainstream Jews; my father, who had immigrated from Eastern Europe in 1913, when he himself was around bar-mitzvah age, was a doctor who practiced in London's East End, the center of the city's Jewish population before rising fortunes allowed a movement outward first to north London and then to the sunny suburban uplands of Golders Green, Hendon, and beyond.

When it came to Uncle Morries, we in fact boasted not one but three, and among them they covered a nice span of Jewish possibilities. One—he was actually a great-uncle—was a minor official of the United Synagogue, the association of Orthodox congregations in London, with a beaming countenance and a set of well-tried jocular catchphrases: at family gatherings, there usually came a point when he would turn to the table where the food was spread out and say, "Now where are the doings?" Another, also a great-uncle, was the oldest of the family's Communists. As a schoolboy I once tried to get a rise out of him by telling him that I had heard that there was a particularly good book about the French Revolution by Edmund Burke. He immediately shot back, "Edmund Burke called working people 'the swinish multitude,' and that's all I need to know about him." Since my own knowledge of Burke at the time was virtually nonexistent, I was completely floored.

The Uncle Morrie who meant the most to me was a real uncle, my father's younger brother. Partly I was impressed by him because he had a striking physical presence: he was unusually tall, much taller than anyone else in the family, with a long strong face to match. He also seemed to me to have style. Possibly this did not mean much more, in my boyish view of things, than the fact that he was rumored to have always taken taxis (which I had been brought up to consider a luxury), even in the days when he couldn't afford them, and that, by the time I knew him, he and his family lived in a smart flat near Regent's Park. But he was undoubtedly intelligent and independent-minded as well, and he had been determined from early on to get away from the more constricting aspects of family life.

One route he took was to Anglicize himself, more than anyone else in my father's fairly traditional family. He changed the spelling of his name to Grose, because it was more English; he sent his

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daughter, who was about my age, to Bedales, a boarding school in Hampshire. But at the same time he was quite assertive about being Jewish, especially in the face of rising anti-Semitism, and he also responded strongly to the attraction of Zionism. It was his Zionist impulse that eventually won out.

He was an accountant by profession, and around 1930 he had gone to Palestine to work for the Palestine Electric Corporation. The founder and manager of the corporation, Pinhas Rutenberg, was one of the most interesting personalities involved in building up the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine. An engineer, Rutenberg had also been a leading member of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary party; as a minister in the short-lived Menshevik-dominated government in 1917, he had consistently advocated taking whatever measures were needed to head off Lenin. In Palestine, Rutenberg's work on hydroelectric power, beginning in the early 20's, had helped to transform the economy. He developed political ambitions there, too, in which he was less successful; but my uncle greatly admired the technocratic, businesslike side of his character.

WHILE IN Palestine my uncle got married. His wife came from a well-known family, originally from the Polish town of Bialystok, and considerably higher up the social scale than ours, as we were more than once reminded. She was a trim, petite woman; my uncle towered over her, and I am told that in the early days of their marriage they were known as the *lulav* and the *esrog* (the tall palm branch and the small citron carried by Jews on the festival of Tabernacles).

Toward the end of the 30's Morrie returned to London with his family. I didn't see much of them on account of the war, and after the war they went back to what was soon to be the state of Israel. My uncle did not have any links with the Labor party, which was the dominant force in Israeli politics at the time, but he eventually found a niche as secretary of the Chamber of Commerce in Haifa. When I stayed with him on my first visit to Israel, in 1953, he seemed to be engaged in daily battles with the leader of the local dock-workers' union. He was also ill, and he died a few years later, still in his forties.

My father was fond of him. So was my mother; and they both respected him. We were close, in other words, to someone who had chosen to live his life in Israel. Did it not follow that we felt close to Israel itself? Would we not have felt close to it anyway?

These are questions I find it impossible to answer with a straight yes or no. As a Jewish enterprise, the Yishuv was something my family had long wished well. As a refuge for Jewish victims of persecution, it was something they had naturally supported. The Jewish resettlement of Palestine had been brought home to them in many different ways, both private and public. But it had never been a central part of their existence: they certainly were not anti-Zionist, but they were not Zionists, either.

That much is what I was told, or what I deduced. By the time I had a clearer picture of what was happening, after 1946 or so, their attitude had begun to change. The period leading up to the establishment of Israel brought new emotions into play—anxiety, anger, admiration—or at any rate greatly heightened old ones. These feelings were inevitably colored by the revelations, still very recent, of what had happened during the war; the whole situation was also rendered more painful by what everyone perceived as the clear pro-Arab, anti-Jewish bias of the British government under Clement Attlee. The role played by the foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, was particularly troublesome.

Under other circumstances, Bevin would have been a hero to many Jews—for his achievements as minister of labor during the war, and indeed for his general performance as foreign secretary. As it was, however, nothing did more to produce a closing of ranks than his notorious remark that "Jews must not try to get to the head of the queue." He was talking about restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. Not only was the remark made in the context of concentration-camp survivors and displaced persons; it was also, so to speak, unnecessary. *Realpolitik* alone would not have dictated it; indeed, *realpolitik* left to itself would probably have shed a few crocodile tears. It felt like an emanation of pure prejudice.

When Israel became an independent state in May 1948, we joined in the general rejoicing. (In a fairly sedate fashion, however: Lou and Harry, the boys next door, stayed up most of the night celebrating with friends; we went over to have a drink with them.) Immediately after that, euphoria gave way to apprehension about the outcome of the Arab-Israeli war; and after that, there were excitements, good moments, bad moments, and readjustments. For a year or two, the sense of sheer novelty was still strong. I can recall the thrill we got from driving over to see the building that housed the first Israeli embassy, hard by the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square. Everyone

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was proud, too, that the first ambassador, Mordecai Eliash, was both distinguished and distinguished-looking. And then, Jews being Jews, there were the inevitable jokes. I quote one, purely for its period flavor: "A miracle! For the first time in 2000 years, Jews are driving their own trains!"

Israel was now a fact of life (except for those who wanted to destroy it). For Jews, or most Jews, it was a large fact. Before Israel became a state, my parents had not, as far as I know, contributed to the Jewish National Fund. They now made an annual donation to its much more streamlined fund-raising successor. Yet the change was only relative. For all its importance, Israel was not at the heart of their concerns, any more than the Yishuv had been. They never saw their future, or that of their children, as lying anywhere but in England.

My own enthusiasm for the new state was stronger than theirs. I was young, I was under the influence of contemporaries, I wanted to see the country for myself. I sometimes wondered, too, about going to live there. But only fitfully; and when I encountered genuine, 100-percent Zionists—people who had settled in Israel, or were planning to—I often found myself backing away from their rigidity and dogmatism, from the demands they laid on me as a potential recruit. I was even slightly put out by the fact that the textbook from which I tried, not very successfully, to learn modern Hebrew was called *Hebrew for All* in English, but *Ivri, l'mad ivrit!*—"Hebrew, Learn Hebrew!," which sounded so very much more peremptory—in Hebrew itself. (The author of the book, who ran a couple of summer schools I attended, was anything but peremptory in person. He was an affable Scottish schoolteacher with a strong Glaswegian accent and a fondness for the essays of Charles Lamb.)

At the same time, I recognized that states are only likely to be built by men and women who make hard demands, both on themselves and on others; and I was equally troubled by the apparently iron logic of Arthur Koestler, who began arguing in this period that, now that Jews had their own state, they were faced with a simple choice. If they wanted to remain Jews, they should go to Israel; otherwise they should forget the whole thing. The only reply I could think of was that life wasn't like that, that people are inconsistent. And so it has proved in the case of Israel and the Jews. But I must admit that Koestler's argument can still ruffle me. At the Passover service, which ends with the prayer "Next year in Jerusalem," I have sometimes imagined his ghost looking down and asking, "Why pray, when you can buy a ticket from El Al?"

My first visit to Israel took place, as I have said, in 1953, when I was eighteen. My parents saw me off at the station (in those days, you went by train and boat), and just before we said goodbye I had the distinct impression that my father wanted to say to me, "Don't stay there. Be sure to come back." In the event, he need not have worried. The visit was a success. My commitment to Israel was strengthened. I met some admirable people, and had some stirring experiences. But I came back.

THE TROUBLES in Palestine produced smaller troubles in Britain. Much smaller, but disagreeable enough.

I remember all too clearly one summer morning in 1947, when I was twelve, picking up the morning paper and seeing a picture on the front page of two British sergeants who had been hanged in an orange grove by the Irgun, the armed underground organization led by Menachem Begin, as a reprisal for the execution of three of its members. That episode provoked several days of anti-Jewish disturbances in London and the provinces. And there were lesser incidents that still sowed ample ill feeling, such as the notorious statement by the pro-Irgun Hollywood writer Ben Hecht that every time a British soldier was killed in Palestine there was a song in his heart. ("What made him say it?" my father wanted to know. "What good did he think it would do?")

Those were difficult times for British Jews. The great majority of them condemned the killing of the sergeants. Most of them, if pressed, would have agreed that an angry public reaction was inevitable, that it would have been inevitable anywhere. But in practice it was often hard to say where inevitable outrage ended and anti-Semitism began. Feelings were tense. Hostility came out into the open.

I can recall witnessing one incident myself. A few of us were fooling around on the edge of a playing field. There had been some talk about Palestine; then a non-Jewish boy suddenly pinned a Jewish boy down and said to him, "You killed Christ." It was the first time I had heard those words uttered, and I was not so much afraid—the victim threw off his tormentor, and there was no further rough-housing—as incredulous. (The scholar Erich Heller, who was much more genial in person than one might suppose from reading such austere books as *The Disinherited Mind*, once told me that when *he* first heard those same words, as a schoolboy in Central Europe, he wanted to reply, "No, it wasn't me, it was the Cohen boys down the road.")

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Anti-Jewish feeling specifically associated with the Palestine issue gradually subsided, even if it did not entirely disappear, and by the 1950's the climate was very different. Nor, for all its unpleasantness, did it seriously hamper the social and economic advances that were being made by English Jews during the same period. And anti-Semitism in general, as a new postwar generation came forward, was also in decline.

In my own case, it had never been a practical problem. But alongside any direct experience—or non-experience—of anti-Semitism, there was also the knowledge that it existed. That knowledge had inevitably taken on a darker aspect since the war, so much so that I felt it important not to go too far, not to equate minor anti-Semitism (the golf-club variety) with major anti-Semitism. But neither could the two be altogether divorced.

Meanwhile, pockets of vicious prejudice were still apparent, above all with the postwar revival of the fascist movement led by Oswald Mosley. One of our routes to north London from the East End for weekend family visits took us past Ridley Road in Dalston—famous for its big street market, which was heavily Jewish but also a site much favored by fascists for their open-air meetings and the scene of frequent pitched battles when those meetings were disrupted by Jewish ex-servicemen who had joined together in a militant defense unit known as the 43 Group. We would make a small detour on our journeys through the area if there was any hint of trouble, or if we saw police vans waiting in the side streets; but one drizzly Sunday we found ourselves held up while a fascist parade marched by with an escort of mounted police. There was that jolt you always get when you see something nasty for the first time, however many times you may have heard about it. Perhaps seeing is the only form of *completely* believing.

Ugly though the postwar Mosleyites were, and frightening though individual fascists could be face to face, collectively they represented less a threat than a reminder: of what had happened in Nazi-occupied Europe, of what could have happened in Britain, of how things had looked before the war. In retrospect, it can be seen that the danger posed by Mosley in the 1930's, of which I had heard a good deal, was itself exaggerated: his fortunes had been in decline by 1937 or 1938. But that retrospect is supplied by the outcome of the war. At the time, the essential menace of the British Union of Fascists had been the reflected menace of Hitler. It was not so much a matter of votes, of which Mosley never got many, as of the fact that he was part of an international pattern, and the fear that he might be riding the wave of history. After 1945, however, he was on his own, and by the end of the 40's, with his revived movement fizzling out, he was a back number.

Around that time—1950 is as close a date as I can get—I had a little reminder that, Mosley or no, pathological anti-Semitism lived on. The family had been spending the afternoon in Kensington Gardens. My father and I had gone for a stroll, and we sat down for a moment on a bench when a couple came and sat beside us. He was a small man with a slightly grubby and indefinably unwholesome look—the kind of man who even in those innocent days would probably have been turned down on sight if he had tried to become a scoutmaster. His wife (as I assume she was) seemed a mere mouse. Almost at once they started having a violently anti-Semitic conversation, with the man doing most of the talking and the woman egging him on. It went on for about a minute—we were transfixed—until he said, "I think they should all be towed out to sea in a ship and drowned." Then we got up and walked away.

I was so naïve, or possibly so reluctant to face the truth, that it was a long while before I realized that the couple had obviously spotted us as Jews, and that the conversation had been conducted specifically for our benefit. What I did find myself wondering, immediately afterward, was why we had not said anything, and why I would not have been ready to hit the man if he had replied with fresh abuse. It would not have taken much courage: he was a puny specimen. Had my father and I, for a minute, assumed the role of passive victims? I felt renewed admiration for the tough tactics of the 43 Group.

One could argue, I suppose, that the couple were too feeble to be worth bothering about. But no doubt many Nazis would have looked similarly feeble if Hitler had not given them their chance. The old poison was still there. One could only hope that it would never again be put to use.

JEWS GROWING up in England after the war (not all of them, I need hardly say) felt under a strong obligation to affirm their Jewishness. Attempting to deny it seemed peculiarly base. I recall a friend, in most respects highly susceptible to the charms of assimilation, saying to me, "I don't want to be the one in whom the whole thing ends." Not that it would have, whatever he had done; but putting the matter that way was an oblique statement of solidarity.

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In my own case, a sense of solidarity helped to sustain my religious beliefs in the face of adolescent wavering. But my doubts did not go away, and one incident in particular helped to underline them as nothing quite had before.

Among the family members left behind in Poland after my father and grandparents left in 1913 there was a cousin, about ten years younger than he, called Moishe Roitenburg. By the time I first heard of him he was Maurice, pronounced in the French fashion (and hence not to be claimed as another Morrie). Unable to fulfill his ambition of becoming a doctor in Poland, he had studied in France and stayed on there after gaining his degree. For a time, I believe, he worked for a miners' union, treating industrial diseases. In 1934, when my parents went to Paris on their honeymoon, he had shown them around, and after the war he had re-established contact. During the Nazi occupation he had inevitably been in deadly danger; *juif* was bad enough, *juif polonais* was worse. Initially he had gone into hiding in the woods, but after that he had been protected by French colleagues. He was now married to a non-Jewish girl, and working at a hospital at Evreux, in Normandy.

On our first postwar visit to Paris, in 1949, he came up from Evreux to have lunch with us. To my inexperienced eyes, he looked very French, but that was probably on account of the thick black frames of his glasses and the cut of his suit. Before lunch, my father made it clear that we still observed *kashrut*, the dietary laws; Maurice may have made it clear in turn (I'm not sure) that he did not. At the restaurant, he took charge of the menu. He first ordered the omelettes or fish that we had dutifully asked for, and then added with a flourish, "*Et pour moi, veau au pot*" ("and for me, the braised veal").

The moment passed without comment, and I didn't think there was going to be any fallout. But when Maurice left and we returned to our hotel, my father was furious. Not only that: his features assumed a jeering expression I had never seen before, and he repeated two or three times, in an attempt at mimicry, "*Et pour moi, veau au pot; et pour moi, veau au pot.*" I kept quiet, which is just as well, because I found his reaction detestable. To get so worked up over such a small thing! To make no allowance for what Maurice had gone through during the war! And wasn't the whole Jewish taboo over food childish and primitive anyway?

Today, it seems to me that both men must have been under pressures I can only guess at. Maurice, after all, struck me as amiable and polite, not someone who would normally have been indifferent to causing offense. And even at the time I had to concede, on reflection, that my father, given how angry he was, had actually shown considerable restraint: things would have been much worse if he had said anything while Maurice was still there. I calmed down, and detestation faded. But distaste remained.

MY FATHER once said to me that no virtue was more important than tolerance. The remark hadn't impressed me quite as much as it should have; I could not help reflecting that tolerance was something in which Jews had a vested interest. What did impress me, however, living with him and observing him, was the extent to which he lived up to his watchword in practice. He was patient, forbearing, and slow to condemn. He got on with people; he took it for granted that we had to live in a world where there were, in the great phrase, "all sorts and conditions of men." Even in matters of religion, he was often prepared to relax the rules. But religion was also his sticking point. Every so often he would take a stand which was not only unyielding but, from my point of view, unreasonable as well.

I think there was another, unspoken issue lurking behind the *veau au pot* incident: the question of intermarriage. Part of my own heated reaction may well have been the result of picturing myself in a similar situation. I dreaded the explosion there would be if one day I were to announce that I was marrying someone who wasn't Jewish. And although my guess is that my parents would eventually have come around (my mother much more readily than my father), there would still have been enormous distress—and embarrassments and long boring arguments, too. But I also knew, without quite wanting to spell it out to myself, that if the problem ever arose I would follow my own path.

The meeting with Maurice was an undoubted milestone, but it would be quite misleading to portray my adolescence as one long process of emancipation from religion. My inner feelings fluctuated; my outward commitment became, if anything, more obvious. As my circle of Jewish friends widened, I spent more time with people who simply took the main framework of Jewish communal life for granted. In particular, I was introduced to a small youth movement, the Study Groups, which suited my needs very well for a year or two. It was religious, in moderation; it encouraged an interest in Israel without being burdened with an ideology. And it was fun. A good deal of our energy went into writing skits and comic songs. One number,

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which I thought and still think was brilliant of its kind, was a parody of a hit French song of the period, "*Les trois cloches*" ("The Three Bells"). It recounted the rise of an *alrightnik* who began life as little Moishele, transmuted himself into Maurice Conway, and ended up in full splendor as Sir Maurice Conway-Ferguson. We performed it, along with some other songs, at a student concert in Israel in 1953, and were warmly received—with one conspicuous exception. The guest of honor, Golda Meir (then a cabinet minister), sat stony-faced throughout. She was not amused.

Much of my continuing readiness to believe, and to pray, was based on loyalty—loyalty to the "little platoon" into which I had been born, and to the larger tradition of which it constituted a tiny part. But religion retained my allegiance on broader grounds, too. To put it minimally, I did not think that terms like soul, spirit, and holiness were meaningless words. It seemed to me that without the realm of religious experience, life would be a thinner and poorer thing, and that it supplied the poetry of collective existence, as rationalism never could. Thomas Gray had written "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"; nobody had yet written "Elegy in a Country Crematorium."

These were arguments, or promptings, in favor of religion in general, rather than of any one religion. But religion in general was nowhere to be found. There were only religions; and although in principle, in an open society, one was free to choose among them, in practice one's choice had been made by history, including personal history. (I might add that history had also instilled in me a tenderness toward the Church of England—toward its liturgy and literature and traditions rather than its actual creed. The decline of the Church in recent years has saddened me, although I suppose a believer might say that I am confusing religious judgments with cultural or aesthetic ones.)

Meanwhile, the forces tugging me toward unbelief remained strong. I was never much drawn to philosophy, but when I was, it was the hard reasoners who attracted me rather than the pseudotheologians; one of the few philosophers I could read for pleasure was David Hume. Had I known it then, I would have been struck by the truth of Heine's observation that as soon as religion solicits the aid of philosophy, it is doomed.

Not that this was the end of the matter; there are more things in heaven and earth, etc. Religion was about faith rather than reason, and there was even a perverse satisfaction in yielding to its unreasonableness. I was thrilled, at the age of fifteen or so, when I first came across Tertullian's *credo quia impossibile*, "I believe because it is impossible." But my enthusiasm soon cooled. I didn't have the temperament to subsist on a diet of impossibility for very long.

In the end, here as in other respects, I wanted the best of both worlds. "Ambiguity" became a blessed word; the fact that so many things contained their opposite was on the whole a comfort. I could have said, with the literary critic Cyril Connolly, that I believed in "the Either, the Or, and the Holy Both." In the real world, however, I edged away from both prayer and observance, giving up my own final food taboos on that first trip to Israel—in Jerusalem, no less.

But there were still limits. To have made a clean break with Judaism would have felt like making a clean break with myself. Wavering became a way of life, and by the age of eighteen I had settled, or seemed to have settled, for a world of token observance and demi-semi-belief.

MY FATHER died in 1960, when I was twenty-five. He had had a coronary—in those days almost an occupational disease of general practitioners—two years before, and his smoking can't have helped. The second time around, he took to his bed for a week or so. Then, when he felt worse, he went into the London Hospital, a grim-looking building in Whitechapel where so many of his patients had been sent in their time.

During the last few days at home he managed to read a little. There were two books by his bedside. One was an account of the younger years of Lord Melbourne, the early-19th-century statesman and prime minister. (What would they have made of that in Gorokhov, the little town in Volhynia where he was born?) "He writes beautifully," he said of the author, David Cecil. The other was *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, the anthology edited by Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, which I had brought back for him from America. He read a story by the poet Chaim Grade in which the central character is a follower of the religious movement known as Musar, and it set him reminiscing. Only briefly; he is tired. But he spoke for a moment or two about the founder of the movement, the 19th-century rabbi Israel Salanter, and of the emphasis the Musarists put on morality—on self-examination and good deeds.

In the hospital he was much weaker, and often in pain. The last conversation we had, as opposed to exchanging a few words, was about Khrushchev, Eisenhower, and the shooting down of America's

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U-2 spy plane, which had just taken place: he was worried about the consequences. ("They wouldn't be mad enough to start a war?") A day or two later, the young doctor who came out from behind the screen around his bed did not really have to say anything: we could read the bad news in his face.

Of the funeral that followed, I remember very little: it was simply something to be gotten through. One incident does stand out, though. On the way back from the cemetery someone introduced me to a small, smiling old woman, and told me that she had been my father's wet nurse. It seemed incredible, a visitation from a world impossibly remote. But later I reflected that she need not have been more than eighty, and could even have been a year or two younger.

Afterward we "sat shivah," observing the traditional seven days of mourning, while relatives and friends visited us at home. In some ways I found this a strain. Reciting kaddish, the mourner's prayer, seemed profoundly right. So did keeping a memorial candle lit for the full seven days. But an elderly relative (not even a close one) had taken charge of the proceedings and insisted we cover the mirrors, which as far as I was concerned introduced a note of spooky superstition; and some of the conversations I was obliged to have with our visitors were either tedious or tense. There were also—a relief, under the circumstances—a few moments of farce. We were presented with a large number of well meant but unwanted gifts, mostly boxes of chocolates, including two containing a brand called Good News.

Work provided a distraction, too. In principle I should have abstained from it; but I had recently begun writing a monthly feature about paperbacks for the *Times Literary Supplement*, and the next one was due. So every so often I slipped upstairs and banged away at my typewriter, and when the piece was ready I took it around to the *TLS* by hand. In accordance with the ritual laws of mourning I had stopped shaving, and I showed up at the office with a four-day growth of beard. Today, it would probably be taken for designer stubble, and pass unremarked, but in 1960 I felt I had to explain why.

Some months later we assembled for the consecration of the tombstone. The inscription I had chosen, a verse from the book of Psalms, testified to my father's upright character. And after that, it was more than 20 years before I saw the cemetery again. When I did, many newer graves had naturally been added. One that caught my eye was that of the East End boxer, Kid Lewis: the inscription on the memorial stone said that he had "taken the count" on such and such a day in 1971. My father's memorial stone was nearby. It had begun to weather.

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An End to Counting by Race?

Tamar Jacoby

THE DECENNIAL census required by the U.S. Constitution has always been entangled with questions of race. The constitutional provision that, until passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, counted a black man as only three-fifths of a person raised problems from the beginning. But race remained a part of the government's population tally even after the Civil War. Until 1970, the Census Bureau decided people's race for them: the enumerator who knocked on the door determined it, sometimes by inquiring, sometimes with a quick look. Since then, respondents have been allowed to answer the question for themselves, picking from an ever-expanding list of racial, ethnic, and national possibilities.

Still, for all these changes, the census continued to conform in one key respect to most people's understanding of what race meant. As the instructions on the form emphasized, "Fill ONE circle for the race that the person considers himself/herself to be." Race was an exclusive category—if you were one thing, you were necessarily not something else, just as you were either male or female.

But the census forms that arrived in the nation's mailboxes in March 2000 were different. It was not that the federal government had decided race and ethnicity were no longer important. Far from it: on both the short and long versions of the questionnaire, one of the first substantive items inquired, "Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?" A second question probed more directly for race but added, by way of instruction, something truly novel: "Mark one *or more*" (emphasis added). Still more surprising, some seven million Americans did just that, refusing to describe themselves as *only* white, black, Asian, Latino, Korean, Samoan, or one of the other categories listed.

Though the number of those who indicated more than one race was seemingly insignificant—less than 3 percent of the population—their action was nothing short of momentous, and may well herald the beginning of the end of racial classifications as we know them.

THE CHANGE in the 2000 census form was no bureaucratic accident, but rather the product of a long, bitter political battle. In the early 1990's, a small group of interracial families began to lobby the government on behalf of their children, who, they maintained, should be able to describe themselves as "multiracial" on the census. A grassroots parents' movement made its case on websites and in special-interest magazines, arguing that young people should not be forced to choose between the identities of their mothers and their fathers. In 1993, this group convinced the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which determines the racial categories used by the federal government, to open an inquiry into the idea of putting a mixed-race box on the census form.

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The civil-rights establishment immediately mobilized to fight back. Organizations like the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the National Council of La Raza recognized the threat such a mixed-race box would pose to the classifications that justify their existence: after all, every dark-skinned child registered in this category would shrink the government's official count of blacks or Latinos or American Indians, eventually reducing the political influence of the organizations claiming to represent these groups. For the better part of the 90's, minority activists and their allies in the federal government mounted an unstinting effort to block any change in the census form.

In 1997, the racial advocates appeared to prevail. After four years of study and angry public debate, OMB decided against allowing the Census Bureau to include the category of "multiracial" or "mixed race." Only as an afterthought did OMB announce that the census would permit respondents to check more than one racial box. And the agency eventually decided that, for official purposes, those who checked both white and a minority category would be counted simply as members of that minority.

Together, these decisions seemed to spell certain defeat for the mixed-race families. Just to make sure, in the months before the census, the civil-rights establishment spent millions of dollars on advertising urging blacks, Latinos, and American Indians to check only one box, counting themselves as one and only one race.

Nevertheless, Americans of mixed heritage were not deterred. People of every color and from every region and age group checked more than one box: 5 percent of blacks, 6 percent of Hispanics, 14 percent of Asians, 40 percent of American Indians. In New York City and other areas heavily populated by immigrants, the proportion ran as high as one in four. Most tellingly for the future, people under the age of eighteen were twice as likely as their elders to identify themselves as multiracial.

The significance of these figures was apparent from the moment they were released—if only, at first, in the chaos they created. The Census Bureau's racial percentages now added up to well over 100. Journalists and the social scientists they looked to for elucidation could not compare the 2000 census to the 1990 count or any that came before it. In short order, Americans found they no longer had clear-cut answers to the simplest questions about who we are as a nation.

How many blacks are there in the United States today? If one counts only the people who checked black alone, the answer is 34.7 million. But if one includes those who checked both black and something else, the number rises to 36.4 million. Are blacks still the country's largest minority group, or do Latinos now outnumber them? It depends whether one includes those extra 1.7 million: yes if one does, no if one does not.

Even more confusing is what happened to the tally of American Indians. If one counts only the people who checked American Indian alone, there are 2.5 million. But add in those whites and blacks who think they have a little Indian blood—and who, prompted by pride or whim, took the trouble to say so on their census forms—and the number jumps to an astonishing 4.1 million, an increase of nearly 65 percent.

WHAT ACCOUNTS for this shift in how Americans are choosing to identify themselves racially? At the center of it, plainly, are mixed-race couples and their children—fruit of the unprecedented rise in intermarriage in recent decades. Even excluding Latinos, who are among the most likely to marry outside their group—but whom the government does not recognize as a race—marriages between whites and non-whites grew tenfold between 1960 and 1990. Among third-generation Latinos and Asians, intermarriage rates now exceed 50 percent, and in California, more mixed-race children than black children are already being born every year.

But intermarriage is not the only factor at work. Latino immigrants, most of whom come from heavily mixed-race countries, are often baffled by the rigid racial categories they discover in the U.S., and are among the Americans most likely to identify themselves as belonging to more than one group. The Census Bureau's illogical insistence on asking a separate question about Hispanic identity—another concession to civil-rights advocates anxious to maintain their group's official numbers—reveals even more starkly than the form otherwise would just how many Latinos consider themselves multiracial. Last year, 48 percent of those who identified themselves as Hispanic also checked white, 2 percent also checked black, 6 percent checked two or more additional boxes, and 42 percent marked "other" (probably a way of suggesting that they equate their race with their ethnicity). Altogether, that makes well over half who identified themselves both as Hispanic and as members of some other group conventionally recognized as a race.

What is more, as demonstrated most dramatically by the tally of American Indians, many of those declaring two or more backgrounds were not the children of recent mixed marriages at all. Some had simply decided that their blended ancestry, however remote, was important enough to them to be mentioned. Still others undoubtedly saw the new options on the census in a more radical light: a chance to stage a small, private revolt against the yoke of race by declaring

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at last that the monolithic categories long used to define them did not capture the reality of who they were.

The response to the 2000 census is hardly the first indication in the history of America or the modern world that human reality is too varied and fluid to be shoehorned into racial categories. In the 19th century, the U.S. census classified people with both black and white ancestors as mulattos, quadroons, and octoroons; but even at a time when interracial marriage was strictly prohibited, these labels soon became odious and absurd. South African apartheid considered a man black if he could not pull a comb through his tightly curled hair. The Nazis had their tests; white Southerners in the Jim Crow era had other tests. The classifications that resulted were always arbitrary and artificial, and in almost every context—when they did not lead to genocide—they eventually collapsed of their own weight.

Nor are the results of the 2000 census the only indication that Americans are tiring of rigid racial categories. While both history and politics argue that race is an immutable characteristic, social scientists find that ordinary people often do not feel this is the case. A recent survey by researchers at the University of Michigan asked teenagers to fill out a form about race at school, then had interviewers put the same questions to them at home, usually in the presence of their parents. On the form, twice as many indicated they were multiracial as said so when they were asked in person.

Recent trends in popular culture—from white teenagers' fascination with rap to the popularity of mixed-race celebrities like Tiger Woods and Mariah Carey—make a mockery of racial categories. So do soaring rates of interracial friendship and dating. This is no fringe phenomenon: according to one recent survey, more than 60 percent of American teenagers have dated someone of another color or ethnic group. And a *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup poll conducted in March found that 64 percent of the public—and 75 percent of those under eighteen—thought it was "good for the country" to have more Americans "think of themselves as multiracial rather than belonging to a single race."

None of this means that race and ethnicity are dead or dying in America. Blacks, whites, Latinos, and Asians are not, in the foreseeable future, going to "melt" into one large, uniform brown race. In practice, even the children of intermarriage make ethnic choices. More often than not, they choose one side of the family over another; and often, several generations later, their descendants are still celebrating the heritage they have chosen. Nevertheless, the solidity of these categories, and their significance for individuals, are plainly changing.

For some people, race remains the most important aspect of their identity. But for others, it is more like a hobby, what sociologists call "symbolic ethnicity." For intermarried Asians and Latinos, and even for some blacks, it can be a voluntary thing. For many Americans, it is a matter not of essence but of choices—about belonging, loyalty, cultural affinity, and the relative weight they assign to ethnic identity. The syndicated columnist Clarence Page, who is black, has characterized this complexity with a vivid metaphor. Race is real enough, he suggests, but also like Jell-O: too slippery and elusive to grab by the handful.

Thanks to the 2000 census, it is likely to become only more so, causing ever-widening ripples of dismay among racial advocates and their allies in government. Consider the confusion spawned by the greatly increased number of people who identified themselves as American Indian. Officials are well aware that this count is an artifact of the new form: no one thinks the largely static Indian population really grew by 65 percent in just ten years. Nevertheless, for official purposes, even those who marked Indian and something else are to be counted as Indians. Does this mean that the federal government is now obligated to increase the services it provides for Native Americans by 65 percent—despite the fact that most of the 1.6 million "new" Indians live nowhere near a reservation and do not formally belong to any tribe? On reflection, even Washington must recognize that this would make no sense.

This may be an extreme example, but it is a taste of things to come. American government spends more than $185 billion a year on special provisions for minorities, and all sorts of public goods are handed out according to racial percentages. Legislative districts, municipal contracts, slots at prestigious universities, government jobs, antipoverty benefits—name the public benefit, and we divide it up by race.

But how can this continue if we can no longer *count* reliably by race—as race itself is revealed as a largely artificial or voluntary construct? The policy most clearly at risk is affirmative action. How is a city or state to set aside some proportionate number of jobs for minority contractors if it cannot determine the number of minority contractors in the population? So too with racial gerrymandering. How will a state legislature go about creating, say, a majority Latino district if it cannot specify who is Latino and who is not? And how can that be determined when some people say they are Latino in one context but not in another? What about those who are half-Latino, or one-quarter, or who merely happen to have a Spanish surname?

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Nor will it be any easier to use racial accounting as a tool to detect discrimination. Though the concept of "disparate impact" has been much challenged, and rightly so, demonstrating that a particular policy has such an effect remains the most common way to allege discrimination and build a case for racial redress. But what will happen when prosecutors can no longer show disparate impact—when they can no longer compare, for example, the number of Latino drivers being stopped and arrested on the New Jersey Turnpike with the number of Latinos who use that highway? Surely we would not want the courts to resort to the same criterion used by offending state troopers—namely, whether a driver "looks" Hispanic.

IF A new multiracial or "mestizo" order is emerging in the United States—and, in the wake of the census, more and more people are acknowledging that such a transformation is under way—a large, troubling question remains: will blacks be part of it?

For those who fear the answer is no, exhibit A is history: the long and often ugly experience of blacks in America and the consequences, psychological and other, that it continues to spawn. Prejudice may also play some part: despite an encouraging abatement of bigotry, many whites continue to view blacks in a less positive light than they view new immigrants, whatever their color or nationality. Then there is black poverty—the persistence of a small but intractable black underclass—that no notion of voluntary ethnicity seems likely to dispel. But perhaps the greatest obstacle of all is the angry, separatist attitudes so prevalent in much of black America, both poor and middle-class. That doing well in school is "acting white," that the only way to be manly is to be ruthlessly predatory, that to cooperate with "the system" is to betray one's origins: it is not difficult to see how this oppositional culture might prevent any significant softening of the hard outlines of racial identity among many blacks.

Still, troubling as these concerns are, there are also signs pointing in a different direction. It is true, for example, that blacks marry outside their group far less frequently than Latinos and Asians; but the rate at which they are doing so has grown significantly over the last generation. In 1960, fewer than 1 percent of married black men had non-black wives; today the figure is more than fifteen times higher. Even more dramatic is the number of black-white interracial births, which, according to one estimate, more than tripled in the 1990's. And given the way attitudes are shifting, particularly in places like California where the racial and immigrant mix is most pronounced, this trend can only accelerate.

Nor is this the only sign that blacks too may be on the cusp of a new and looser racial understanding. In fact, the 2000 census suggests that blacks may be among the Americans most eager for a change in that direction. Not only were blacks under eighteen far more inclined than their elders to mark more than one racial box, but young blacks were twice as likely to do so as other young people: astonishingly, nearly one in 10 of them chose this option. Equally telling in this regard is the *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup poll, which found that blacks approved of the new easing of racial lines no less heartily than whites did.

Certainly the black-white color line is going to be harder to cross or blur than other racial and ethnic boundaries. When it comes to race, what other people think you are often matters as much as, if not more than, what you think. And blacks who checked more than one box on the census may be ignoring the political reality of the world around them—a reality shaped as much these days by the civil-rights establishment as by lingering white prejudice. Still, by making their choices known, multiracial Americans have taken a big step toward changing that reality.

IT WILL not do—and it helps no one—to be Pollyana-ish. Obscuring or blurring the lines among groups will hardly solve all problems of race and ethnicity. It will not tell Americans how to negotiate their differences with one another, or how far to go in developing their identities. Nor will it answer the increasingly pressing question of what ideals and purposes we share as a nation. But it might help us to do something almost as important: to separate the realm where race and ethnicity matter, and should matter, from the realm where they do not, if only because they cannot.

An age-old American formula that has long worked for white ethnics, if not for blacks, distinguishes the role race and ethnicity play in the public sphere from the part they can and should play in our private lives, at home, and in our neighborhoods. Our long-held ideals argue that the public realm must be race-neutral, while in private, race and ethnicity may be fostered, celebrated—or ignored, as individuals choose. This is hardly a foolproof formula, but in a nation composed of a multitude of groups it is a necessary one. And the beauty of it today, given the way Americans' feelings about race are changing, is that it need not be arbitrarily imposed or enforced from above.

On the contrary, as the 2000 census suggests, the line has begun to draw itself naturally. The more Americans realize that ethnic and even racial identification can be a matter of personal choice, the fuzzier such categories will grow—and, one can only hope, the harder it will be for government to traffic in them.

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Howie's Gift

A Story

Joseph Epstein

DRIVING UP the Edens Expressway, looking for the eastbound exit to Dundee Road, I wondered whether accepting this invitation had been such a hot idea. I hadn't seen Howie Shapiro for at least five years, and before then, ever since he went off to medical school nearly 30 years ago, we had run into each other only sporadically, never by plan but usually outside a movie theater or in a restaurant or maybe at a Bulls game. Nor had I ever been invited to his house in the suburb of Glencoe, or what the old anti-Semites on the North Shore used to call Glen Cohen.

It was against Howie, who tonight was going to celebrate his 50th birthday, that I had committed my last act of violence. I was eleven at the time, and we had just moved to West Rogers Park where my father, in a step up for us, had bought a two-flat. It was late July, school was still more than a month away, and I knew no one in the neighborhood. I would get up, eat breakfast, work on our small lawn, sometimes run an errand for my mother on Devon Avenue.

Most of my afternoons that summer I spent on roller skates, the old-fashioned kind with the key worn on a string around the neck. I skated on the street, where the asphalt was much smoother than on the lined and cracked sidewalks. Even now, 40 years later, I can feel the pleasure of strong strides and long glides, the clatter of my skates on the street, the hum of the ball bearings rising up from the bottoms of my feet.

I had just gotten an ice-cream cone—butter pecan, double dip—from the fountain at Sanders Drugstore on Pratt when I turned and bumped into the kid in line behind me, who had been standing too close. The ice cream fell from the cone and plopped, sickeningly, onto Sanders's none-too-clean floor.

"Watch out, stupid," I said, lightly pushing the kid. To my amazement, he fell backward, legs in the air, completely upended. As he tried to get up, I noticed that he was wearing a built-up shoe, a heavy brown one. His right leg must have been a good four inches shorter than his left.

"Sorry. God, I'm sorry," I said, giving him a hand up.

"My fault," he said. "I shouldn't've been standing so close. Lemme buy you another ice cream."

"No," I said, "it's O.K. You all right?"

"I'm fine," he said. "Really. I'm good. My name's Howie Shapiro."

"Ben Cohen," I said, shaking the long-fingered hand he held out to me.

We walked home together. He was taller than I, but his bad leg, which he tended to drag, caused his body to lean slightly forward and to the left. His black hair fell into his eyes, which were blue and very alert.

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Howie's family lived, like mine, in a two-flat, three blocks away on Talman Avenue near Albion. He had two older sisters, Susan and Phyllis. His father, a small dark man with great energy and high spirits, was a salesman for Abbott Laboratories. The dark hair and blue eyes came from his mother, a tallish woman who went about her housewifely work with a perpetual air of anxiety.

Once school began in September, it was Howie who dissuaded me from ever taking seriously any ability I once thought I had in mathematics or science. It wasn't that I was so bad. But, physically awkward as he was, he was just that smooth and fast in mental calculation. I don't know his IQ—intelligence tests were a big deal in those days—but it must have been ferociously high. With his long, bony fingers he was also adept at building the most intricate model airplanes, using his X-acto knife to carve balsa wood with what seemed to me, who always made an impatient botch of it, astonishing precision.

West Rogers Park turned out to be a neighborhood where, if you weren't a good athlete, you had better be witty. Howie's leg prevented him from playing, but he sometimes umped our playground slow-pitch softball games and occasionally, if we lacked a full contingent, he would pitch, though his heavy shoe made quick movements impossible. He knew a tremendous amount about major-league baseball; no statistic, once locked in by his powerful memory, ever escaped. The rest of us sometimes used him to settle arguments over things like how many home runs Swish Nicholson hit for the Cubs in 1944, or Luke Appling's record for the greatest number of foul balls in a single time at bat. His authority on these matters was indisputable.

Dragging his right leg, Howie managed to get on. Girls liked him, sensing his kindness and no doubt pitying him a little. Teachers recognized his gifts. Yet he somehow never allowed himself to lapse into the role of teacher's pet. If he was no shakes at all on the playground and almost too adept at school, that was okay. Rough though we kids were on each other, invoking any physical deficiency or irregularity to brand someone with a nickname—because of my stick-out ears, I was known as Juggy all through high school—no one ever dinged Howie.

We were never best or even especially close friends. But I would sometimes find myself at Howie's apartment, and you didn't have to be there long to realize that in his own home he was a hugely privileged person. The youngest child, he was the only boy, and long awaited—especially by his father. Like most men in the neighborhood, Harry Shapiro had come into his maturity during the Depression and never went to college. But he was determined that his only son would not only go to college but become a physician.

This was still the age when doctors were like gods, not least to a pharmaceutical salesman like Harry Shapiro, who worked around them all day. My own father, a man with a healthy cynicism about human nature and a pretty tough guy generally, would go all fluttery in the presence of doctors. His very voice seemed to rise a full octave when addressing his physician, a dull and, as I later learned, often medically incorrect man named Aaron Lerner.

The second time I visited Howie he took me down to the basement where his father had set up a lab for him: a Bunsen burner, seven or eight differently shaped beakers, lots of test tubes, a couple of dry-cell batteries, a half-dissected frog, two white rabbits in separate cages. The full paraphernalia of the budding scientist was in place in that dark room on Talman Avenue. I asked Howie if Dr. Frankenstein ever came by.

"One doctor's enough," he said with his engaging smile, and from behind a collection of test tubes he took out a small mahogany rectangle with a dark metal placard that read, in gold lettering, Dr. Howard I. Shapiro, M.D. "My dad had it made for me," he said, letting his eyes go upward, his thin arms shooting out, palms up.

"Pretty wild."

"I guess," Howie said. "My being a doctor is everything to my old man."

I remember thinking how nice it must be to be so tied to your father's dreams. Whatever my own father's dreams, I didn't appear in them. "You gotta love what you do," was his full text on the subject of my future, to which he would usually add, "What else can I tell you?" Although I would subsequently come to recognize this for genuine wisdom, at the time I wished he could be more specific. He himself sold auto parts, and seemed happy enough at it so long as business was good.

GROWING UP in West Rogers Park was not the Jewish upbringing I would later read about in memoirs by second-generation Jewish artists and intellectuals: all violin lessons, revolutionary politics discussed at the dinner table, *bobbe* in her room reading Tolstoy in Yiddish. In our neighborhood, politics, modern art, psychotherapy—the Jewish trifecta—played no role whatsoever. Fathers were too busy with their work as salesmen, owners of

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small businesses, or one-man law practices. Their horizons ended with making a good living and being excellent providers. As for their sons, most of the boys I knew in grade school and high school went on to the University of Illinois, where they majored in business; the rest, a small minority, aimed at dental or medical school.

Not taking any chances, Harry Shapiro sent Howie to Evanston Township, the nearby suburban high school that was much better than Nicholas Senn, the Chicago public school the rest of us attended. At $600 a year for nonresidents, Evanston was a big ticket; in those days, a year at the University of Chicago ran just under $900. Howie flourished at Evanston. As a student manager of the baseball team he invited me once to a game his school was playing against New Trier. The game was predictably boring—all pitching, as high-school baseball tends to be—but waiting afterward to drive Howie home I watched him rounding up the equipment, dragging his built-up shoe across the base paths, unscrewing the three bases to put them away in the equipment shed. Howie's lack of physical grace, even of normal mobility—how much, I wondered, did he think about it? To me it would have meant a very substantial loss. Yet I never heard him complain, rail against his bad luck, or at the world's injustice.

Howie's good mind was given a more than respectable workout at Evanston. In his senior year he won the Westinghouse Science Prize—his project had something to do with enzymes—which carried a full scholarship to Swarthmore. He was looking forward to it, but when Harry Shapiro discovered that Howie could enroll in the medical school of the University of Illinois after only three years as an undergraduate there, Swarthmore was dead in the water.

I didn't see all that much of Howie when we were both students at Illinois. He was a Phi Sig, living in Urbana; I was a Phi Ep, living in neighboring Champaign. Like all pre-med students in those days, he was buried in four-hour labs or preparing for some crucial exam. The competition for medical school was fierce. A grade of B in a major science course could delay entry into med school by a year, a C or two could knock you out of the box permanently, forcing desperate application to schools in Italy or Latin America.

I would see Howie occasionally at the library or at Kam's, the beer hall on Daniel Street. Once we ducked in to split a pitcher, and after a couple of glasses he confided that if he had his way he would drop the whole idea of medical school and do graduate work in biochemistry, the subject that really fascinated him.

"It's a much more interesting game, Ben," he said. "Why not just do it?"

"I can't let my dad down. It would kill him. To him I'm already in my office at the Pittsfield Building. I wouldn't be surprised if he'd already ordered white coats with Dr. Howard Shapiro, M.D. over the pocket."

I had recently undergone something of a conversion of my own. Having begun at Illinois studying business like everyone else, in my second year I took an elective in introductory sociology that blew me away. The notion that society was largely a human construct, that people had in effect made the whole damn thing up and kept it all going by playing their preappointed roles, elementary though it seems to me today, absolutely floored me then. Not long afterward, I changed my major. When my father asked me what possible use a degree in sociology could be, I lied and said I was thinking of going to law school, for which it would be useful preparation. Never having gone to college himself, he took my word for it.

The decision to study sociology changed my life, or so I believed at the time. I moved out of the fraternity, and I began to look in a more detached way upon the culture in which I had grown up. I decided that there were things in the world more important than money and what it could buy—a thought that made me feel tremendously liberated. Eventually I did a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, and, wanting to stay in the city, got a job teaching sociology at DePaul, which is where I am today.

I have to report that Harry Shapiro died, of colon cancer, in his son's last year of med school, and so never got to shake his hand and say, "Congratulations, Dr. Shapiro." A year later Howie married a girl named Sandy Weiner who had been a grade behind me at Senn. Small, plain, she had lived on Lake Shore Drive and came from a well-to-do family: German Jews, I'm almost certain. Howie's M.D. must have made up in prestige for the four inches he'd been shorted in his right leg. I wasn't—and didn't really expect to be—invited to the wedding, which took place at the Standard Club.

"Kishkes," Howie told me when I asked him about his medical specialty a few years later. "Gastroenterology, Ben. I'm a big kishkes man." He was coming out of Joe Stein's Rumanian Steak House as I was going in, and was, I think, a bit drunk. He still wore the built-up shoe: medical science hadn't yet found a way to add several inches to

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a person's leg. The parking attendant brought up a tan-colored Mercedes convertible for Howie and his wife. She drove; he waved from the passenger seat.

I remember asking myself at the time if Harry Shapiro's death by colon cancer had anything to do with his son's specialty. Before attending this birthday party for Howie, I asked Bill Doyle, a colleague at DePaul whose subject is the sociology of medicine, about the earning capacity of gastroenterologists. Bill is amusingly cynical in his view of doctors—"a Marxist with a dirty mind," is the way he describes himself.

"The trick to turning a big buck in medicine," he told me, "is to have that magic procedure: that little exam that you can do over and over again, almost in your sleep, which will bring in heavy green. The gastro gang's cash cow is the colonoscopy. On a good morning, doing six or seven of these puppies, an efficient guy can pull in fifteen grand."

I whistled softly.

"We're in the wrong field, Ben. 'Course, to do the job you have to be able to stand a fair of amount of blood and shit, which, let's face it, is not to everyone's taste. But unless he's spending half his time bonking his nurses, a gastroenterologist ought to be able to bring in six or seven hundred g's per annum without working up a heavy sweat."

What, I wondered, would Harry Shapiro have made of all this? He'd have been damned pleased, I'm sure. It was what he'd had in mind for Howie: nicely settled in life, a physician, a powerful money-maker, well married, with (I'd heard) two daughters.

I myself drove a Ford Escort, eight years old.

Not that I'd ever doubted the rightness of my decision not to go for the money, even though by now it had become apparent that I would do no major work as a social scientist. I'm no Max Weber. My specialty is something called the "culture of poverty," and my work is chiefly statistical, having to do with welfare recipients on the west side of Chicago; I prepare the ground out of which broader minds are supposed to build the monuments.

Still, sometimes I can't help wondering what my life would have been like if I had gone to law school. Would I, for instance, think a lot less about money than I do? The irony of my situation seems pretty heavy to me: forgoing money in my choice of career, only to be obsessed with money and status just about every day of my life. Would I be out of the financial wars, driving a car like Howie's, flashing a confident smile, if I hadn't taken that sociology course?

When Sandy Shapiro had called to invite me to Howie's party she'd said it would be all right, if I liked, to bring a date. How she had heard I was divorced, I don't know; but I did bring a date, a woman in the anthropology department named Mary O'Brien whose company I enjoy. Mary is a bit of a feminist, like, nowadays, almost every academic woman in her thirties. She's smart, funny, with a taste for truth-telling that I find appealing. We enjoy each other's company without any impulse on either side to take things further. Mary knew nothing about Howie's and my background, but I did tell her that the evening might just turn out to be her Trobriand Islands—she could plan on seeing some fairly exotic natives, and without having to spend the night on a cot in a bug-infested grass hut.

WHEN WE pulled up in my unwashed Ford, the Jaguars, Lexuses, Mercedes, and gleaming SUV's parked on the street and in the driveway made me feel we had arrived not so much in a car as in a small slum. Every man at this party, I estimated, made at least a quarter-million a year more than I, and many a lot more—as Mary, bright girl, would have no difficulty seeing.

I was wearing my standard get-up, blazer and gray trousers, white shirt with button-down collar, striped tie. Mary, whose background is lower-middle-class Chicago Irish, was in a long black skirt and white blouse, with a lightweight red cardigan draped over her shoulders. Since I expected to know a number of people from high school and the old neighborhood, I preferred, all other things being equal, to show up with a handsome woman. Mary qualified.

Sandy Shapiro met us at the door, her smile revealing capped teeth that I figured must have priced out at around 30 grand. I introduced Mary—"Professor O'Brien"—and the two women shook hands. We confronted a large marble-floored foyer, high ceilings, views up a winding staircase, spacious rooms going off in three directions, the early light of a summer evening pouring in. The decorating, very much *House & Garden*, seemed in extremely good taste, no nutty sculpture or other surprises. I thought about the Shapiros' dark apartment on Talman Avenue, with its three small bedrooms, one bath, and postage-stamp-size lawn, and I tried to imagine Harry Shapiro, who used to spend a lot of time walking around in ribbed undershirts, in this house. Although Howie and I had started out in roughly the same circumstances, here he was living in grandeur while I had gone from three bedrooms on Maplewood to a one-bedroom, book-stuffed

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apartment on Belden, just west of Sheffield. Had it *ever* been in my power to acquire a house like this? I would never know.

"The party's out back," Sandy Shapiro said. "The caterer has just set up. Dinner should be in less than an hour."

"Jesus, Benjy Cohen?" asked a large man, bald, with a carefully groomed beard beginning to go white.

"Sorry," I said. "I don't quite . . ."

"Just because a guy's lost his hair, gained sixty pounds, and has a white beard is no excuse not to recognize him," he smiled back, adding, "David Aronson, you putz."

"David, forgive me." I introduced Mary, again as Professor O'Brien.

"Hey, Professor," he said. Turning, he neatly slipped two fluted champagne glasses off the tray carried by a passing blonde waitress, handing one to each of us. "Dom Perignon, Benjy. Nothing but the best for Dr. Howie."

We were soon informed that David had taken over his deceased father's business—bar and restaurant supplies—and that he ran it out of the same showroom and warehouse on West Jackson. David had two kids in college, one at Michigan and the other at Indiana. "What about yourself?"

I started to explain—my twenty years and more at DePaul, my divorce, my two daughters who (I did not say) lived with my ex-wife in northern California and whom I saw twice a year at best—when a short, pudgy guy walked past, his long, carefully layered hair falling back on a peach-colored jacket. David grabbed his arm. "Pauly, you recognize this turkey?

"Benjy! God—like 30 years maybe? How goes it, Ben?"

It was Pauly Bernstein, who I'd heard had made a killing off a book called *Who's Who in Teenage America*, with spinoffs to follow. Other guys from what I was beginning to think of as the Old Country soon joined the circle: Larry Denenberg, a patent lawyer with Kirkland & Ellis and the first Jew to obtain a co-op apartment at 970 Lake Shore Drive; Burt Rudy, who played basketball for Loyola and now had a seat on the commodities market; Ronnie Rosen, an orthodontist who had scored in real estate and was preparing for early retirement; an internist named Arnie Singer; Allan Greengoss, an investment counselor who told me—a touch sheepishly, I thought—that he had dropped the "goss" and was now plain Al Green.

We talked about the old days—the all-night poker games at Dicky Levinson's apartment when his parents were away in Florida; the dances at the Edgewater Beach Hotel, where we first heard the Four Freshmen; the day that Peter Pan, after getting caught serving horse meat, provided free hamburgers at its two restaurants. Had Mary not been at my side, there would have been talk about the rides to the cathouses in Braidwood and Kankakee or about visits to Doris, who kept an apartment two blocks from the old Chicago Stadium, and Iona, ex-wife to Bob Satterfield, the light-heavyweight champ with a glass jaw, who lived at 4726 South St. Lawrence.

"I miss the smell of the old Chicago Stadium," Pauly Bernstein said, "that fine confection of urine and frying onions." He was about to say more when one of the Nordic-looking waitresses announced that dinner was being served under the tent.

Following the crowd, I thought how much I enjoyed this talk, these guys, and yet how out of it I felt in this house. Had I betrayed them, had I betrayed my younger self, by living so very different a life? Or was I betraying my grown self with fantasies about the life I might have led? Already the evening was getting more complicated than I had expected.

The tent, with its yellow and white stripes, was enormous, though it took up only a small part of the Shapiro's vast backyard. Under it I counted eleven tables, each set up for eight people. At one end a small combo—guitar, bass, piano—played show tunes in a nice, understated way; at the other, young men in tuxedo shirts and black bow ties from Gateaux Frères stood behind trays of lobster salad, boneless breast of chicken with wild rice, minuscule carrots and dried tomatoes, Dover sole with small French beans and a white vegetable I couldn't identify but that Mary thought might be baby turnips. At the end of the table, a large black man wearing a white apron and a two-foot-high chef's hat was slicing thick portions from a tenderloin of beef and serving small roast potatoes and salad to go with. Waiting in line for our food, I tried to fill Mary in on the men I had introduced her to and my memory of them as boys.

Most of the tables up front were filled, but we found two empty seats toward the rear with Sandy Shapiro's father, a CPA, and his second wife. A younger associate of Howie's named Art Brodsky and his wife, who introduced herself as Kimmie, were also at the table, as were Sandy's younger sister Sara and her husband, a dentist named Mickey Schoenwald. Conversation did not come easily. Mr. Weiner wanted to know how I had come to know

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his son-in-law. Kimmie Brodsky asked Mary if she worked out, she was so slim. In the background we heard Cole Porter, Gershwin, Jerome Kern.

"Are you at least taking notes on this?" I whispered to Mary.

"No need to," she shot back. "I'm wearing a wire."

As we were finishing the main course a stocky man got up at the head table. Florid, with thinning gray hair done up in curls, wearing very small round glasses, he was, it took me a moment to realize, Earle Berkson, who had played third base on our old softball team sponsored by the Ashkenaz Deli on Morse Avenue. It took me another moment or two to visualize him off the hot corner, which as I remembered he had played with a fearless aggressiveness. Sandy's father leaned in to tell me he was now a plastic surgeon, very successful.

"Allow me to greet all the friends and family of my dear friend Dr. Howard Shapiro," Earle said with easy confidence. "Howie, shmuck, stand up."

Howie got to his feet. It was the first I had seen him this evening. He was beautifully turned out, in a cream-colored linen jacket, dark gray trousers, a light blue shirt, gold silk tie perfectly knotted. His wife, I assumed, was dressing him, and doing a fine job of it. But he was still Howie. Tall, bony, he had retained his dark hair, which was starting to show gray at the temples and no longer fell into his eyes. I couldn't see his heavy shoe, but it must have been there.

"So, Howie, fifty big ones, baby," Earle continued. "Lots of lessening powers to look forward to, but I'm sure you're prepared. And lots of achievements to look back on. A quarter-century of successful medical practice, a loving wife, two swell daughters, this terrific house, expensive cars made exclusively by perpetrators of genocide, a condo in Boca. Goddammit, Howie, you've got it all. And richly deserved, too, my man."

Howie smiled warily, no doubt waiting for the bucket of ice water to drop from the ceiling, the trap door to open beneath him.

"When a bunch of your friends got together," Earle went on, "we wondered, What could we get Howie for his fiftieth? I mean here is a man who has everything, right? What do you get this man that he doesn't already have? Only one thing, obviously." He signaled to his right; the combo struck up "Night Train."

"Ladies and gentlemen," Earle announced, "courtesy of the Internet, www.happydreams.com, Ms. Reddi Flame!" From the left, a redhead, in G-string and tights, sequined, tasseled pasties covering her nipples, came shimmying over, stopped, and put her head on Howie's shoulder. She was tall, in her high heels nearly as tall as Howie. She looked to be in her late thirties, very *zaftig*.

"Happy birthday, Dr. Howie, darling," she said. Removing the pasties, shimmying again, she leaned in, rubbed against him, nuzzled his cheek. "Hmm, that was good." Then she looked out at the rest of us, sticking out her tongue in a manner that did not imply insult.

Until that moment I had never thought of a woman's breasts as dolorous. But so these seemed, and so at that moment did poor Howie. So, in fact, did we all. I glanced around quickly. Howie's mother-in-law had gone slack at the mouth, his father-in-law's face was red. The only one who seemed to be enjoying things was the black man in the chef's hat, smiling from behind his cutting board. The band, for some reason I didn't quite get, began playing "The Anniversary Waltz." To the left, whence the woman had made her entrance, I saw two men in ersatz black leather jackets, probably sent by the agency to look out for her. Mary, who had done her dissertation on gift-giving among the Navajo Indians, had rolled back her eyes. This, I thought, was one gift the Navajos never gave.

The entire tent seemed stuck, on freeze-frame. And then Howie did a wondrous thing. Turning to the woman, he stepped back, bowed at the waist, took her hand in his, and kissed it. Then, in a single, seamless move of astonishing grace, he somehow twirled out of his creamy jacket, made a brilliant, bullfighter-like veronica, and slipped it over her, bending to button it at the waist, covering her nakedness. Holding her hand in his, he announced: "Earle, what can I say? I thank you, Sandy I'm sure thanks you, my kids, and my in-laws, we all thank you, for making this into what I now realize is going to be a truly memorable night. But I see from here that dessert is almost ready. Please, everyone, join me in devouring my birthday cake."

And still holding Ms. Reddi Flame by the hand, stopping to pick up his wife, whose hand he also grasped, Howie walked in his old leg-dragging way toward the back of the tent. I had to restrain myself from giving him a one-man standing ovation.

AFTER EVERYONE had been served cake we sang "Happy Birthday," and Howie thanked his wife and kids and everyone for coming and making it a special night. (In an otherwise graceful speech, I thought he overworked the "special," but that's the pedant in me.) I looked over at Mary, who signaled it was all right with her if we made our exit.

There remained only to say goodbye to Howie,

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to whom I hadn't yet spoken. He was still eating his dessert, flanked by a teenage daughter who had the misfortune to look a lot like her grandfather Harry. The stripper must have quietly left; Howie had his jacket back.

"Ben!" he said, as Mary and I approached. "Ben, it's great to see you. Glad you could come. How the hell are you?"

"Not as good as you, friend," I said, feeling the reassuring pressure of his large hand. "That move with your sport coat. That was impressive. Where'd you pick that up? In Barcelona?"

"Don't know, but it seemed to be there when I needed it."

He stood up, holding on to the table as I introduced him to Mary. "Hope these goings-on didn't upset you, Professor," he said.

"Nothing I haven't seen before, Dr. Shapiro," Mary said. "Every morning in the shower, in fact."

"Nice girl, Ben," Howie said. "You gotta bring her around again."

"I'll do it," I said, though I knew it wasn't going to happen.

Back in the car, on the Edens, I asked Mary for her anthropologist's-eye view of the night's proceedings.

"A most strange tribe," she began, in mock scientific pomposity. "The men have a fetish for German motors and large, complicated wristwatches; possible talismanic meaning here. They enjoy rehearsing stories of their days as young warriors, though none of these stories has anything exactly to do with war. Women of the tribe make grand expenditures on soft fabrics, dentistry; much talk of diets with contradictory passion for food, especially miniature vegetables. No actual love practices among the natives, though some evidence of sex in the head. Kinship patterns need further investigation. United by religion though they are, it is less than clear what gods they worship."

"Solid report, Professor," I said. "Genius, as Schopenhauer said, is objectivity, and as a member of the aforementioned tribe I salute you. Now can you tell me why, despite my own longing for objectivity and all my efforts at escape, I find I can't leave this tribe, and for some reason don't want to?"

"Perhaps because it contains people like your friend Howie Shapiro."

"Ah, Howie."

"He really is a sweetie, your old pal. And outside all anthropological explanation."

"Other kinds, too, I'm pretty sure," I said.

Turning the Ford rather too abruptly at the Fullerton exit, I heard a Dunkin' Donuts coffee cup fall from the back seat onto the floor, and at that moment had an overpowering premonition that the rest of my days would be lived at an unhappy middle distance from the society I was once so pleased to think a pure invention.

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OBSERVATIONS

When Presidents Speak

Michael J. Lewis

NOT VERY long ago it seemed that George W. Bush—he of the mangled syntax, chronic malapropisms, and conspicuously laissez-faire attitude toward the relationship between nouns and verbs—was simply too inarticulate to be President. Eight months before the election, the columnist Michael Kelly, an otherwise sympathetic observer, was speaking authoritatively of the "pinhead factor," as if Bush's tongue-tied manner constituted plain evidence of a fatally incapacitated brain. On the same basis, it was confidently predicted that in televised debate Bush would be a ready victim for the allegedly nimble and tenacious Al Gore. For a time it seemed that the election itself pivoted not on great questions of public policy, where differences between the candidates were often muted, but on the ability to speak an intelligent sentence without stumbling.*

Of course it was really Bill Clinton, rather than the hectoring Al Gore, against whom Bush was being measured. For almost a decade, Clinton's fluid and assured speech had been regarded as the modern standard for effective communication. This was not due to Clinton's famous volubility, first glimpsed during his interminable nominating speech for Michael Dukakis at the Democratic convention in 1988. Rather, it lay in his much-vaunted knack for "connecting" with an audience, that mysterious process by which an intangible exchange of impulses and responses leads to a communion of feeling. Every stage actor or performing musician knows, and yearns for, this communion. Most impressively of all, Clinton was able to achieve it effectively on television, tailoring his delivery to the scale of the living room in much the same way that the young Frank Sinatra calibrated his voice for the microphone, singing into it as if whispering into someone's ear.

Still, for all the high premium now placed on "communication skills"—formerly known as public speaking—few would call this a Periclean age of oratory. It is a commonplace that modern television campaigning has promoted a slick and cloying style of delivery, organized around the regular and mechanical ejection of focus-group-tested sound bites. Anyone who has not mastered this style has little chance of entering American public life.

In presidential politics, the avatar of this style is usually said to be Ronald Reagan. As it happens, Clinton's technique was avowedly modeled on Reagan's, whose speeches he carefully studied even as he also sought consciously to emulate his true hero, John F. Kennedy. But two recent books cast a revealing light on Reagan's and Clinton's rather different relationship to the words they used.

THE LEGEND of Reagan as the Great Communicator was a creation at least as much of the Left as

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* For an unflattering collection of quotations from the President and President-to-be, see *George W. Bushisms: The Slate Book of the Accidental Wit and Wisdom of Our 43rd President*, edited by Jacob Weisberg. Simon & Schuster (paperback), 96 pp., $9.95.

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of the Right. In liberal usage this was, at best, a backhanded compliment, meant to expose his success as an achievement of public relations rather than of ideas. According to this view, Reagan, another "pinhead," brought to the presidency the same limited bundle of skills he had brought to Hollywood: a facility for projecting trustworthiness and sincerity, and a certain folksy charm in reading the words of other men. (That this was also a fairly accurate description of many of the TV journalists covering Reagan probably did not occur to them.) Reagan's eloquence, such as it was, was dismissed as a second-hand product devised by a stable of writers like Peggy Noonan, who joined him in 1986.

Abundant anecdotes reinforced this view. Reagan's habit of cupping his ear in feigned deafness at a shouted question occasioned much ridicule as a ploy to conceal an inability to think on his feet. His most celebrated ad-libs—such as "There you go again," his display of mock-exasperation during his 1980 debate with Jimmy Carter—were derided as rehearsed. An unscripted Reagan—so the legend went—had nothing to say or, even worse, was liable to say anything, as when he once joked, in the presence of an open microphone, that he was going to launch a nuclear strike on the Soviet Union in ten minutes.

With the publication of *Reagan, In His Own Hand*, this legend requires substantial revision.* This is not a collection of important public utterances, and it includes virtually none of Reagan's presidential addresses. Instead, it is limited to only those texts for which a handwritten manuscript survives. Many of these come from the periphery of Reagan's career, ranging from high-school juvenilia to a weekly column on Hollywood for the *Des Moines Sunday Register* to the tragic letter in which he bade farewell to public life. They have been carefully transcribed to show Reagan's own deletions and insertions, and in some cases they are accompanied by photographs of the texts themselves. In all this there is a clear tone of defensiveness. As the book jacket rather flatly claims, "Here is definite proof that Ronald Reagan was very much the author of his own ideas."

The defensive note is unfortunate, for what the book proves is actually more important—namely, that Reagan's talent for communicating was as much the talent of a writer as of an actor. If this aspect of his career has gone unremarked, it is because he did not write the books that are our measure of literary achievement. His two autobiographies were ghostwritten and, unlike Nixon or Carter, he was not interested in publishing for its own sake. Reagan's literary persona was essentially that of a journalist.

This is amply demonstrated in the most substantial portion of the book, Reagan's scripts for *Viewpoint*, the five-minute daily radio broadcast he delivered from 1975 to 1979, between his term as governor of California and his successful run for the presidency. Consisting of pointed commentaries on topical issues, they have the dated feel of old editorials; but as political history they are high drama. In them we see him formulating the comprehensive platform with which he would soundly drub Carter. If, during that campaign, Reagan seemed so effortlessly and maddeningly glib, it was because he had already thought through and epitomized for himself virtually every issue of public and foreign policy—from arms control to energy policy to public education. Here is the secret of what many assumed to be careful coaching.

A FIVE-MINUTE talk runs to about 600 words, that is, about two double-spaced pages, and to make a point thoughtfully and persuasively it requires an extraordinary economy of means. (Where the issue at hand could not be treated in a single commentary, Reagan extended the discussion over several programs.) In essence, these are the radio equivalent of op-ed pieces. Reagan had been a radio announcer in his formative years, well before he went to Hollywood, and had thus acquired the lifetime habits of a profession in which success depends on sustaining interest through the compelling use of words. But it is nevertheless striking how he crafted these pieces for the spoken voice.

Every program began with a "teaser," an opening hook that was immediately followed by a commercial. Generally these are the parts of a script that are written last, as an afterthought; but when Reagan sat down to write, he invariably began with them, establishing at the outset the dramatic momentum that would pull both him and his listeners through until the end. From the very first he showed a talent for capturing the kernel of a controversy in an arresting or unexpected formulation. For example: "Will Alaska wind up as our biggest state or will it be our smallest state surrounded by our biggest national park? I'll be right back."

In his foreword to *Reagan, In His Own Hand*, former Secretary of State George P. Shultz recalls how, as President, Reagan once approved a foreign-policy speech Shultz was about to deliver but then added, "Of course, if I were giving that speech, it would be different." The text, he opined to an abashed Shultz, had been written to be read in the *New York Times*, not to be spoken aloud. Flipping through the manuscript, he penciled in a few changes and marked out the section that contained, or should contain, the "story." Nothing of substance was altered, but, writes Shultz, "I saw that he had changed the tone of my speech completely."

Reagan's interest in maintaining a continuous arc of interest explains the lengths to which he went to

* Edited by Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson. Free Press, 549 pp., $30.00.

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avoid seeming to read his speeches. This, he felt, disturbed the sense of spontaneous thought that was essential to gaining a listener's attention. The editors provide a vivid vignette of his technique on the campaign trail, where Teleprompters were not in use. Reagan painstakingly transferred his texts onto 4"-by-6" index cards, abbreviating in large block letters. The cards were then placed in the side pocket of his suit, out of sight as he strode to the podium, his arms swinging jauntily. Only as he waved at the audience with one hand did he slide the cards onto the podium with the other.

Reading itself was a challenge. Reagan's contact lenses were for distance, and he learned to remove one of them just before he arrived at a speaking engagement. The right eye read the cards while the left eye read the audience. As the editors suggest, "Reagan's speech system gave the appearance of being casual and spontaneous, while in reality his speeches had the cold precision of any carefully researched and typed speech manuscript."

THAT BILL Clinton attached a similar importance to direct and spontaneous engagement with an audience is clear from *POTUS Speaks: Finding the Words that Defined the Clinton Presidency*, a memoir by Michael Waldman.* Like Reagan's editors, Waldman, who was hired to help write Clinton's first inaugural address and served as director of speechwriting from 1995 to 1999, also brings a somewhat defensive tone to his subject, conceding that Clinton lacked the gift of "soaring rhetoric":

> Clinton does not leave a long trail of chiseled phrases. . . . Frequently his speeches read like what they are: transcripts of a highly persuasive man trying to win a listener's agreement. The prose of policy, not the prose of rhetoric, was what mattered.

This is a retrospective judgment. The truth is that Clinton clearly yearned to make sweeping, plangent pronouncements, and he incessantly demanded vivid and memorable phrases on the order of John F. Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." For a time the search for a counterpart to this phrase threatened to paralyze the writers of his first inaugural address, until Waldman posted the rule, "No Reversible-Raincoat Sentences" (Calvin Trillin's term for those neat inversions, what rhetoricians call chiasmus, that Theodore Sorensen had devised for Kennedy).

As might be expected, the writing of Clinton's first inaugural was an extraordinarily loose affair. Apart from the ceremonial theme of renewal, Clinton gave no specific program to his speechwriters. Instead, as Waldman found, he liked "to act by reacting," developing his own ideas by talking to as many people as possible. The inaugural shows the strengths and weakness of this approach. It contained its share of striking phrases, including the unusual horticultural metaphor that introduced it: "This ceremony is held in the depth of winter. But, by the words we speak and the faces we show the world, we force the spring." There was also a certain measure of sentimental bathos ("Anyone who has ever watched a child's eyes wander into sleep knows what posterity is") and even a reversible raincoat: "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be fixed by what is right with America." The speech was widely praised; William Safire compared it favorably to the Gettysburg Address.

Even as his speechwriters continued to labor over their stately lyrical prose, however, Clinton was also drawn to a rhetoric of emotional sincerity and authenticity. In this he showed his roots in the 60's, and in a generation instructed to "tell it like it is." But, as his first State of the Union address in February 1993 would attest, he also showed his roots in another and much older American tradition. During that speech, his writers were stunned to watch him drift from the text. Waldman reports their reaction: "'He's ad-libbing! He's ad-libbing the State of the Union!' we shouted, and gave each other a high five." (It is hard to believe they actually felt quite so joyous at the time.) Waldman attributes the improvisation to the President's ability "to surmount an inadequate draft," but this hardly accounts for what was, in Clinton, a nearly irresistible urge, one that shows up again and again in this account and that occasionally got him into hot water (as with his rambling speech nominating Dukakis).

It is reasonable to speculate that what ultimately lay behind this tendency to ad-lib was a variant of the old low-church tradition of bursting forth in unpremeditated public declarations of faith. Introduced during the Great Awakening of the 1740's, this was the "enthusiasm" that so alarmed high-church clerics of the late 18th century. It has since developed deep roots in the American South, where "testifying" plays a major role in black evangelical worship (and where the tradition of powerful public oratory still survives). For all Clinton's envy of Kennedy's formal poetry, this was one natural background of his own oratory, and one that, for better or worse, proved all but irrepressible.

BUT WHAT was being expressed in this oratory? To return to the inaugural that so impressed Safire and others, it consisted almost entirely of generalities. As was often the case with subsequent Clinton speeches, listeners were enthusiastic but unable to summarize precisely what its content was. Everything remained on a high plane of abstraction, without any of the startlingly concrete statements—"It is my intention to curb the size and influence of the federal establishment"—that had made

* Simon & Schuster, 224 pp., $25.00.

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Reagan's first inaugural so bracing.

The fact that Clinton's own "intention" was to do the opposite of what Reagan had promised was not the real problem. The real problem was that, politically, he could not say so, and did not want to say so; the rhetoric was thus designed to dissemble rather than truly to communicate. Not until the Republican congressional victories in the midterm election of 1994 did Clinton feel compelled to concentrate his mind. Waldman provides an engrossing account of the sudden appearance at that time of Dick Morris and his role in disciplining Clinton's response to the loss of Democratic control of Congress. During the weeks of the government shutdown, Morris coordinated the public-relations offensive, playing the part of *consigliere* to the chagrin of the discredited George Stephanopoulos and Harold Ickes.

Morris was not one to back into a speech through free association; each speech prepared under his direction followed a disciplined program. A lean and forceful writer himself, he was responsible for much of the 1995 State of the Union address, Clinton's response to the congressional Republicans' Contract with America. The most important speech of the Clinton presidency (not involving personal matters), it marked the public unveiling of Morris's celebrated strategy of triangulation, by which Republican ideas would either be appropriated or else branded as extreme and therefore un-American.

This was accomplished with a piece of stagecraft that was singularly repugnant, but also effective. Clinton called attention to a man in the audience, a hero of the Oklahoma City bombing who at great personal risk had repeatedly entered the destroyed federal building to carry out injured victims. After Republicans rose in a thundering ovation, Clinton abruptly revealed that the same man was a victim of the recent government shutdown, and had been working without pay to counsel Social Security recipients. While Republicans looked on confused, he delivered the *coup de grâce*: "I challenge all of you in this chamber: never, ever shut the federal government down again."

Ironically enough, the speech might have been even more effective but for the tireless commissars of political correctness at the White House. Morris himself wrote the central line: "The era of big government is over. But the era of every man for himself must never begin." This was a succinct formulation of triangulation, expressed in crisp Anglo-Saxon cadences. Although Waldman expected the first part of the statement to unleash an internal furor among Clinton's more liberal advisers, to his surprise Ann Lewis, a campaign spokesman, objected to the second, calling it sexist. The phrase was rewritten in appallingly turgid fashion: "The era of big government is over," the President eventually declared, "but we cannot go back to the time when our citizens were left to fend for themselves."

The phrase backfired spectacularly. The vigorous first line resonated while the second one was ignored, taking away the impact of the parallel construction. And thus Clinton's second term came inadvertently, if fittingly, to be characterized by a phrase that was a straw man, rather than by the withering rebuttal that was meant to knock it down.

THE FACT that Clinton's message could so easily be read, or heard, in more than one way is also a clue to why, for all his celebrated charisma as a public speaker, his oratory has not stayed with us. It was, in the end, all rhetoric. By contrast, the spoken formulations of the man who allegedly owed the most to the techniques of modern mass communication and the sound bite were palpably in harmony, at least at crucial moments, with his deepest personal conviction.

"Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Such elegant alignment of word and feeling came naturally to Ronald Reagan. It did not come naturally to Bill Clinton, whose most memorable lines, delivered with the greatest of passion and evident sincerity—"I did not have sexual relations with that woman," "It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is"—concerned precisely those things he did not mean and knew to be false. In this regard, and despite his verbal clumsiness, George W. Bush would so far seem the truer heir of the Great Communicator.

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MUSIC

The Riddle of Yehudi Menuhin

Terry Teachout

FOR MUCH of the 20th century, Yehudi Menuhin embodied the world's idea of the child prodigy. Born in 1916, he began studying the violin at five; by the age of thirteen, he had appeared in Berlin, London, New York, and Paris, performing with such celebrated conductors as Fritz Busch, Georges Enesco, and Bruno Walter. "He was a child, and yet he was a man and a great artist," Walter would later recall. Virtually everyone who heard the young Menuhin agreed that he was a musician of remarkable seriousness and accomplishment, mature far beyond his years.

To be sure, similar things have been said of any number of other prodigies, past and present. But Menuhin was also the first to *record* extensively in his youth, and not merely encore pieces but sonatas and concertos by major composers. This made it possible for subsequent generations to hear for themselves the artistry that led Albert Einstein to exclaim, "Now I know there is a God in heaven."

As Menuhin grew older, and as the 78's on which his reputation had originally been based went out of print, he re-recorded his repertoire, first for long-playing records and then again in stereo. These later recordings were generally thought to be competent, but inconsistent: a far cry from the playing that had stunned Einstein and Walter. Menuhin responded by cutting back on his solo appearances, turning instead to conducting, teaching, and various other ventures, including politics broadly understood. From the 1960's on, he was seen less as a violinist than as a kind of all-purpose idealist, spouting forth opinions about everything from yoga (good) to nationalism (bad). Meanwhile, new prodigies were starting to perform and to record at even earlier ages, making his once-astonishing childhood career seem almost commonplace. By the time of his death in 1999, he had long since ceased to be a household name.

Starting in the early 90's, though, Menuhin's prewar records began to be transferred to CD, allowing modern-day listeners to hear what he sounded like in the 20's and 30's. And now he is the subject of a biography by Humphrey Burton, a British TV producer who knew Menuhin well and worked with him on many occasions.*

Like Burton's previous biography of Leonard Bernstein, *Yehudi Menuhin: A Life* is sympathetic but candid, especially about the role Menuhin's parents played in his early career. Burton, who differs from the vast majority of critics in hearing "very little falling off" in the quality of Menuhin's postwar playing, does not understand the technical problems with which the violinist was beset from the 40's on. But his book contains enough well-informed testimony to indicate why the most celebrated prodigy of his time failed to fulfill his seemingly miraculous promise.

IN A SENSE, every classical musician is a prodigy, for exceptional musical talent always manifests itself early in life, and it is not uncommon for a gifted youngster to begin studying

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY's *music critic and a contributor to* Time *magazine, is finishing* H.L. Mencken: A Life.

* *Yehudi Menuhin: A Life*. Northeastern University Press, 561 pp., $35.00. Currently available CD versions of Menuhin's early recordings are listed in the selected discography at the end of this piece.

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violin or piano around the age of six. Unlike "ordinarily" gifted children, however, prodigies develop near-professional techniques within an unusually brief time, perhaps as little as three or four years. What happens next depends on their parents.

"Believe me, when you find a prodigy, you find an ambitious parent in the background," said the violinist Ruggiero Ricci, a prodigy himself and one who knew whereof he spoke. Some parents have scrupulously kept their young charges out of the spotlight of publicity, but such restraint is comparatively rare; the rule is more or less shameless exploitation. Yehudi Menuhin's parents were exceptional only in their lifelong insistence that they had never exploited their son. The facts tell a different story.

Moshe and Marutha Mnuchin were Russian Jews who arrived in the U.S. by way of Palestine, eventually settling in San Francisco and changing the family name when Moshe took American citizenship in 1919. Though they taught Hebrew for a living, the Mnuchins were wholly secularized, loathing the insularity of the ghettoes from which they came. They also had (in Burton's inadvertently revealing phrase) "a progressive outlook on Zionism," meaning that they were opposed to it. At the same time, however, they never tried to shed their Jewish identities, and when a New York landlord, mistaking them for Gentiles, sought to entice them by explaining that no Jews were allowed in his apartment house, Marutha vowed on the spot that she would name her first-born son "Yehudi," the Hebrew word for a Jew.

According to the later testimony of Yaltah Menuhin, the younger of Yehudi's two sisters, Marutha "believed her destiny was to give birth to a genius." His parents began taking him to concerts when he was two years old; by 1921, aged five, he was studying the violin in earnest, first with Sigmund Anker, one of San Francisco's leading teachers, then with Louis Persinger, a pupil of the great Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe.* He made his formal debut in 1924 at eight; two years later, he performed Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* with the San Francisco Symphony, of which Persinger was the concertmaster.

How does a child so young learn to play so well? The phenomenon has yet to be adequately explained, but prodigies clearly have a highly developed aptitude for mimesis—the ability to imitate with uncanny exactitude whatever they see or hear. As Menuhin would explain in *Unfinished Journey*, his 1977 memoir, Persinger "demonstrated and I imitated, winning achievement by ear, without detour through the conscious mind." Persinger described their studies similarly in a 1924 interview:

> We began our study of a new work, after its general characteristics were made clear to him, by going over it phrase by phrase. I would play the phrase, he would repeat it as exactly as possible. . . . [H]e seemed to absorb everything I taught him the way a sponge absorbs water.

The flaw in this "method" is that it is not in fact methodical. Prodigies learn so naturally and rapidly that their teachers are invariably tempted to let them play difficult pieces without having first systematically worked through the fundamentals of mechanical technique. When Menuhin performed the *Symphonie espagnole* for Ysaÿe in 1927, the older violinist declared himself "very happy indeed." Then he asked the boy to play a four-octave arpeggio in A major, the most basic of technical exercises. Incredibly, Menuhin muffed it. But not so incredibly after all: his teacher Persinger had never made him play arpeggio studies, or any other kind of étude.

The problem was not that Menuhin lacked a virtuoso technique—by this time, he had already made his New York recital debut, to rave reviews—but rather that the technique was the product of imitation rather than comprehension. In his own words, he played "more or less as a bird sings, instinctively, uncalculating, unthinkingly."

Recognizing that he needed further training, Moshe now took him to Europe to work with Georges Enesco and, later, Adolf Busch, two of the most profoundly musical violinists of the century. But both men, like Persinger, were inspiring coaches rather than methodical pedagogues, and though they taught him much about interpretation, he learned nothing from them about technique. Then and later, he was on his own.

Not long after Yehudi began to study with Enesco, Moshe Menuhin quit his teaching job to become his son's manager. By then, Moshe and Marutha also had two daughters, Hephzibah (born in 1920) and Yaltah (born in 1921), both of whom shared Yehudi's musical gifts and became fine pianists. All three Menuhins were tutored privately, and were disallowed contact with other boys and girls. "In hotels and even on railway trains," Burton writes, the Menuhins "reserved a family suite, with a kitchen. Only once or twice in the first 20 years of his life did Yehudi eat out in a public restaurant."

According to Moshe, the purpose of this isolation was to protect his son from cynical promoters and to permit him to develop naturally as a musician:

> If he has a touch of genius—and I am compelled to believe he has—our task is to surround him with such a sane, helpful atmosphere that his capacities will unfold as plans unfold in a healthy environment.

But the truth is that Yehudi spent his entire boyhood in an *un*healthy

* Around this time, Moshe changed Yehudi's "official" birthday from April 22, 1916, to January 22, 1917, in order to make the boy seem even younger than he was. (Menuhin's age is given correctly throughout this essay.)

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environment, rigidly controlled by his parents, from which he was permitted to venture forth solely in order to make money. That he somehow managed to flourish as an artist was due not to the good sense of his rapacious father, but to his extraordinary talent.

In 1927, Menuhin played the Beethoven Violin Concerto with Fritz Busch (Adolf's brother) and the New York Symphony. A musician of the highest seriousness, Busch was at first reluctant to collaborate with an eleven-year-old wunderkind on one of the cornerstones of the classical repertoire. But a single run-through changed his mind: "Yehudi played so gloriously, and with such complete mastery, that by the second orchestral *tutti* I was already won over. This was perfection."

The public—and the critics—agreed. The concert, for which Menuhin was dressed in velvet knickerbockers (Moshe would not let him perform in long pants until 1931), turned him into a celebrity virtually overnight. He cut his first recordings four months later, and embarked on a full-scale U.S. tour the following winter. A 1929 concert with Bruno Walter and the Berlin Philharmonic, at which he played concertos by Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, put the seal on his success. Thereafter, he would be as big a box-office draw as Jascha Heifetz or Fritz Kreisler, the idols of his San Francisco childhood.*

For all his popularity in the concert hall, it was Menuhin's records that made him an international superstar. Between 1928 and 1939, he recorded works for violin and orchestra by Bach, Bruch, Chausson, Dvorák, Elgar, Lalo, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Paganini, and Schumann, as well as a large number of sonatas and shorter pieces, including the very first complete set of Bach's unaccompanied sonatas and partitas. Most of the piano-accompanied sonatas also featured Hephzibah Menuhin, who had made her own debut at the age of eight and with whom Yehudi performed frequently in the 30's.

What is most immediately striking about these recordings is that outside of certain deliberate (and brilliant) evocations of Heifetz and Kreisler—like Bazzini's *La Ronde des lutins* and Kreisler's own *Caprice viennois* and *Tambourin chinois*—Menuhin does not resemble any other violinist, not even Busch or Enesco. The big, sweet tone, the wide but beautifully controlled vibrato, the forceful attack and frank emotionalism: all add up to a style that is both instantly recognizable and irresistibly personal. Except for Heifetz, no other child prodigy has had so individual a manner of playing.

Moreover, none of Menuhin's early recordings *sounds* like the work of a child, though some are plainly the work of an unformed young man. Thus, his 1936 performance of the Bach A-Minor Sonata, attractive enough in its own uncomplicated terms, cannot stand up to comparison with the lean, incisive tone and boldly asymmetrical phrasing of the masterly version recorded three years earlier by Joseph Szigeti. Next to such deeply considered playing, Menuhin sounds almost naïve.

But if the austere rigor of unaccompanied Bach was just beyond the young Menuhin's intellectual grasp, he was altogether at home in romantic music, and it is in a quartet of romantic works recorded between 1931 and 1933 that he comes completely into his own. Bruch's G-Minor Concerto, Sir Edward Elgar's B-Minor Concerto (conducted by the seventy-five-year-old composer, who called his sixteen-year-old soloist "the most wonderful artist I have ever heard"), Ravel's *Tzigane* (accompanied by the peerless ensemble pianist Artur Balsam), and the *Symphonie espagnole* (conducted by Enesco) are direct, open-hearted, and unaffectedly expressive. They rank among the greatest performances ever given by any violinist, at any age.

NO PRODIGY, however great his gifts, can escape the awkwardness of adolescence. Around 1934, a note of uncertainty began to creep into Menuhin's playing. This is especially evident in the Beethoven *Kreutzer* Sonata he recorded that year with Hephzibah: a heavy-footed, oddly slow performance that recalls an acute remark made about Yehudi in 1935 by the music critic Ferruccio Bonavia:

> Neither child nor man, he has lost the divine simplicity of the former without having had the foundations of the individual style that is necessary to the grown man. The innocence has passed to his sister.

The change noted by Bonavia was due in part to the fact that Menuhin, though still under Moshe's heavy thumb, was no longer a child: in 1938, at the age of twenty-two, he would meet and marry his first wife, Nola. But in retrospect, it can also be seen as an outgrowth and harbinger of the technical difficulties that would dog him for the rest of his playing days.

As early as a 1940 recording with Hephzibah of the Brahms G-Major Sonata, Menuhin's tone had become infected with an intermittent wobble. Burton dismisses it as trivial, merely remarking in passing that the violinist "could not always maintain a steady pressure of the bow on the strings." But such unsteadiness is a sure sign of underlying technical trouble, and within a few years it had become impossible to ignore. Although he briefly recaptured the interpretative self-confidence—if not the tonal stability—of his adolescence, the fabric of his sound continued to unravel. After the early 50's, he would never again play consistently well.

At first, Menuhin thought the unsteadiness in his bow arm was the result of muscular tension—hence

* By 1928, Menuhin was already earning a minimum of $3,500 a concert—about $34,000 today—plus 20 percent of receipts in excess of the guarantee.

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his initial interest in yoga as a possible means of relieving that tension. But as his playing slowly disintegrated, he came to realize that he had mistaken a symptom for the cause. In a 1980 interview, he acknowledged what "old photographs" revealed: the playing position of his right arm and hand was "absolutely atrocious." Specifically, his use of "pressure exerted through the first finger" caused a "lack of a proper balance in the bow."

This was, as it happens, the same right-hand grip employed by Louis Persinger's teacher, Eugène Ysaÿe—who had fallen victim to a chronic bowing tremor that cut short his own playing career. Undoubtedly, Persinger passed on the defective position to his infallibly mimetic student. By the time Menuhin realized it, he could not completely undo the damage caused by muscular habits acquired in childhood and reinforced by incessant repetition in adolescence.

Carl Flesch, the foremost violin teacher of the prewar era, wrote of Ysaÿe: "His end as a violinist provided a striking proof of the absolute need for correct technical foundations even where the artist is endowed with genius." Much the same thing could have been said of Menuhin.

Technical and personal problems often travel in tandem. In 1944, Menuhin met and became romantically involved with Diana Gould, an English ballet dancer; three years later, he divorced his first wife to marry her. By then, he knew his playing was not what it had been, and it is tempting to speculate that his turn to nonmusical subjects had something to do with the disorder of his private and professional lives. Whatever the reason, shortly after the end of World War II Menuhin began embracing a variety of causes, most of them impeccably of the Left (though he would always be sound on the issue of repression in the Soviet Union). He continued in this vein ever after.

When it came to Judaism and Israel, Menuhin typically chose whatever position was likely to offend the largest number of Jews. One of the most egregious was his single-handed attempt to "de-Nazify" the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, who had held an official government post in Hitler's Germany and had conducted there throughout the war. True, Furtwängler's wartime record was sufficiently murky to justify legitimate differences of opinion; but Menuhin went out of his way to perform and record with him at a time when most Jewish musicians refused to appear on the same platform.

Menuhin's ambivalence toward Israel, a legacy of his father's anti-Zionism, brought him under fire on other occasions, most notably during his tenure as president of the International Music Council (IMC), a United Nations department that Burton crisply dismisses as "a talking shop for idealists, mandarins, and hangers-on." When UNESCO, the parent agency of the IMC, officially censured Israel in 1974, Menuhin was publicly pressured to resign. He refused to do so, leading the pianist Arthur Rubinstein to brand him "a bad Jew."

But if the stances adopted by Menuhin offended some, they also won him popularity with others. This was especially the case in England, where he had settled in 1960, eventually renouncing his American citizenship to become a British subject and accept a knighthood. There, Sir Yehudi—later Lord Menuhin of Stoke d'Abernon—happily played the role of elder (musical) statesman, freely indulging what the skeptical Alexander Waugh called his "love and peace waffle." (Of Menuhin's deep-seated streak of self-righteousness his brother-in-law once remarked, "Very few people interested Yehudi. He was interested in *all* people.") Though he continued to make occasional appearances as a soloist until three years before his death, he spent most of his time conducting, giving woolly-minded speeches, and teaching at the Yehudi Menuhin International School, an institute for gifted young musicians which he founded in 1963 and on whose grounds he was buried after his death in 1999.

Today, child prodigies are a seemingly indispensable part of the classical-music economy. The Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin was a veteran of the concert stage by the time he was sixteen; the Korean-American violinist Sarah Chang recorded her first CD at the age of nine.

Some contemporary prodigies, Kissin in particular, are indisputably major talents, while others, like the English soprano Charlotte Church, have no business performing in public. But none of them should ever have been subjected to the stresses of a modern, media-driven musical career at such young ages. Virtually every classical musician who has been allowed to perform professionally as a child (other than on isolated occasions) has experienced crippling psychological trauma as a result, and very few have been able to sustain major careers upon reaching adulthood.

In this respect, Menuhin has had an almost entirely negative influence on the culture of classical music, for he was the first child prodigy to live out his whole life as a media figure. He became the model for all who followed him, driving down the age at which one could qualify as a genuine prodigy. Without his phenomenal example, there might be no Sarah Changs—or Charlotte Churches. One can only hope they will escape the unhappy trajectory of his later career.

But even if Menuhin's youthful triumphs have long since been superseded by the still more youthful triumphs of his successors, we still have the records he made as a boy, at which it remains impossible not to marvel. Perhaps the scientific study of the brain will some day

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shed light on why child prodigies are able to do what they do. For now, every prodigy is an impenetrable mystery, and Menuhin was among the greatest mysteries of all.

How did he do it? How *could* an innocent, inexperienced child interpret the classics with so great a degree of sensitivity and comprehension that distinguished artists, five times his age, unhesitatingly treated him as their equal? Three-quarters of a century after he made the first of the records that to this day continue to dazzle all who hear them, it seems less likely than ever that science alone will supply an answer to the riddle that was Yehudi Menuhin.

Menuhin on CD: A Select Discography

YEHUDI MENUHIN'S early recordings are now widely available for the first time since their original appearance on 78's. Here are some of the best, as well as a few made after his youthful peak:

1928: Franz Ries's *La Capricciosa*, recorded at Menuhin's first session for Victor (with Louis Persinger at the piano), is found on *The Young Menuhin: Encores*, together with seventeen other shorter pieces—including *La Ronde des lutins*, *Tambourin chinois*, and the Ravel *Tzigane*—that show him at his most virtuosic (Testament SBT-1003).

1931-32: Menuhin's classic recordings of the Bruch G-Minor Concerto, Op. 26 (conducted by Sir Landon Ronald), and the Elgar B-Minor Concerto, Op. 61 (conducted by the composer), both accompanied by the London Symphony, are now available on a single budget-priced CD, flawlessly remastered by Mark Obert-Thorn. Not yet released in the U.S., it can be ordered directly from England on line at www.amazon.co.uk (Naxos 8.110902).

1933: The violinist/conductor/composer Georges Enesco joined his most celebrated pupil in the studio for Chausson's *Poème* and the Lalo *Symphonie espagnole*, both accompanied by the Paris Symphony (EMI References 65960).

1934-36: The first complete recording of Bach's six sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin, made by Menuhin in the mid-30's, is now available on a two-disk set (EMI Références 67197, two CD's).

1934-40: Menuhin's artistic partnership with his sister Hephzibah is documented in a collection of sonata performances that includes the Bach E-Major Sonata, BWV 1016; the Beethoven A-Major Sonata (*Kreutzer*), Op. 47, and G-Major Sonata, Op. 96; and the Brahms G-Major Sonata, Op. 78, and D-Minor Sonata, Op. 108. This imported set, currently unavailable in the U.S., can be ordered on line at www.amazon.co.uk (Biddulph LAB 124/5, two CD's).

1947: The most important of Menuhin's postwar recordings was his first version of the Beethoven D-Major Violin Concerto, Op. 61, with Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra. Later performances of the concerto—including the better-known 1953 remake with Furtwängler and the Philharmonia—document the decline in his playing (Testament SBT-1109).

1951: Menuhin's mature style can be heard at its most technically assured on *Menuhin in Japan*, which contains remakes of Bach's G-Minor Sonata and E-Major Partita and the *Kreutzer* Sonata (plus other sonatas and encore pieces, including *Caprice viennois*), all recorded in two days of marathon sessions held during the violinist's 1951 tour of Japan (Biddulph LAB 162/63, two CD's).

Except as indicated, all of the CD's listed above can be purchased on line by viewing this article on COMMENTARY's website:
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Books in Review

A Lit Fuse

Saddam's Bombmaker: The Terrifying Inside Story of the Iraqi Nuclear and Biological Weapons Agenda
by Khidhir Hamza with Jeff Stein
Scribner. 352 pp. $26.00

Reviewed by
Daniel Pipes

MOST NUCLEAR physicists these days lead a fairly humdrum existence; but not if they live in Iraq. Khidhir Hamza, born in that country in 1939, and fascinated by electricity from a young age, attended Baghdad University before receiving a master's degree from MIT and a Ph.D. in theoretical nuclear physics from Florida State University in 1968. After beginning his teaching career at an American college, he was summoned back to teach in Iraq in order to pay off his educational debts.

DANIEL PIPES *is director of the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum and a columnist for the* Jerusalem Post.

Invited to join the nascent Iraqi nuclear effort in 1972, Hamza did so with some enthusiasm, considering it a wonderful professional challenge. At the time, he did not rate very highly the prospects of a bomb actually being built; and, he reasoned, even if that should somehow come to pass, surely the weapon would be used as a negotiating chip vis-à-vis Israel and nothing more. "The mission," he writes here, was in any case "breathtaking: build a nuclear bomb from scratch, starting on a dining-room table."

Hamza soon began a long march through the bureaucracy, manifesting, in addition to his talents as a scientist and scholar, a finely tuned aptitude for staying out of trouble. Of Iraq's three original nuclear scientists, he alone in those early years managed to escape the capricious wrath of Saddam Hussein, who was still making his way toward the absolute power he would gain in 1979. By 1981, Hamza was working directly for Saddam; by 1987, he had reached the position of director general of Iraq's nuclear-weapons program.

His new status inevitably brought head-turning benefits: a high salary, fancy cars, travel to the West, even a residence within the presidential compound. "All that loot was softening me up, I don't deny it," Hamza writes in *Saddam's Bombmaker*. "But it was the project itself, the enormity of the task, and the pure, scientific challenge of cracking the atomic code, that excited me more."

Even as he rose through the ranks, however, Hamza worried about surviving his contact with Saddam. With time, indeed, his absorbing intellectual venture turned into a descent into a kind of Stalinist hell. Not only did colleagues begin to turn up murdered, but it was becoming increasingly clear that Saddam Hussein actually intended to use the bombs Hamza was working on developing. Though himself untouched by torture or other barbarities, and still benefiting from occasional trips abroad ("just walking down Broadway [in New York] and breathing free air was invigorating"), Saddam's chief nuclear scientist saw enough to want out.

In 1987, he began trying to extricate himself not just from build-

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ing the bomb but from Iraq. He achieved the first goal three years later, leaving active administration and returning to the classroom. In 1994, although feeling "too old, too comfortable, [and] too scared," he managed to accomplish the second. After a particularly stressful year in limbo, mostly in Libya, he was finally joined by his wife and three sons. The family settled quietly in the United States, and Hamza underwent a comprehensive debriefing.

Today, rightly fearful that Saddam wants him dead, Hamza lives in a semi-underground manner, partly by means of tactics taught him many years earlier for evading Israeli agents. Although he has been well-known in the circles of Iraq-watchers, *Saddam's Bombmaker* represents his most sustained effort to go public. A memoir, and a compellingly written one (thanks in large part to his co-writer Jeff Stein), it also contains important and reliable information, from a credible author, on two quite distinct topics of current interest: the inner workings of the Iraqi nuclear-weapons project, and life at the highest levels of the Iraqi regime. It is hard to say which is scarier.

HAMZA ESTABLISHES that Iraq's nuclear-weapons program has followed two principal stages. The initial one, lasting from 1972 until 1981, involved a relatively small investment of money and depended heavily on imported (mostly French) technology. The second one began with the Israeli destruction of Iraq's Osirak reactor in June 1981, an event that spurred the regime to rethink and radically expand its whole program. Hamza thus agrees with Shimon Peres's controversial assessment that, from Israel's point of view, the attack on Osirak was a mistake.

After 1981, in any event, and proceeding more or less indigenously, the Iraqis devoted 25 times more resources than previously to the bomb. Their headlong effort culminated in 1990 with (in Hamza's words) "a crude, one-and-a-half ton nuclear device"—not quite yet a bomb, and far too large to be carried on a missile, but an important step along the way.

As Hamza documents, the outside world was slow to recognize the change from stage one to stage two, and this had important consequences in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Not realizing how much the Iraqis themselves had accomplished, those leading the disarmament efforts after 1991 focused not on Iraq's capabilities—both material and intellectual—but on actual weapons. Destroying those weapons would have made sense had Saddam's regime depended on imported material and talent; as things stood, it was a nearly futile undertaking, for they could always be rebuilt. Only in mid-1995, when the U.S. government simultaneously debriefed Hamza and his former boss (and Saddam's son-in-law) Hussein Kamil, did it realize the true scope of Iraq's program.

According to Hamza, it was his identification of the 25 or so key nuclear scientists in Iraq, and where they could be found, that drove Saddam to close down international inspections in mid-1998. Today, Hamza estimated at a recent presentation in New York, Iraq is "undoubtedly on the precipice of nuclear power," and will have "between three to five nuclear weapons by 2005." What it will do then is a nice question, the answer to which depends in part on circumstances but in much larger part on the designs, and the character, of its president.

THIS IS where Hamza's second topic comes in: Saddam Hussein's personality and the nature of the regime he has built up. One thing we learn from this book is that, in common with other despots of recent times, he is a man who sees danger truly everywhere. Thus, he has "a terrible fear, perhaps paranoia, about

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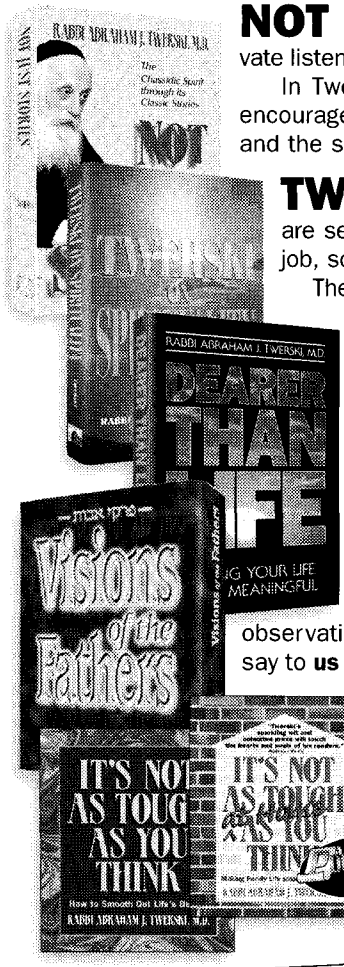
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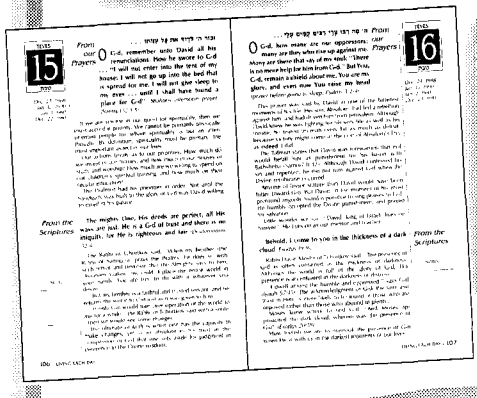

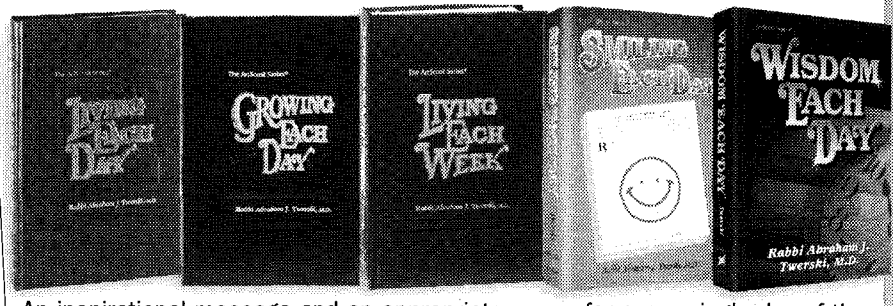

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germs"; any visitor to a room where he is present must undergo an eye, ear, and mouth inspection before entering. Stalin, one recalls, had his regime's top figures sample his food; Mao suspected his swimming pool was poisoned, and refused medical care at the hands of doctors he was sure would do him in.

Saddam also has a taste for virgins—who, among other desirable qualities, are thought to be less disease-prone. In one anecdote related by Hamza, a young woman who pleaded with the president for aid after the death of her father ended up losing her virginity after having been given a beauty makeover and left naked on a bed to await his (wordless) pleasure. Although she was let go with an envelope of money, other "young, beautiful, and flirtatious" women who have serviced Saddam find themselves retained as virtual slaves to clean the apartments of his *nomenklatura*. Or else not retained at all; Hamza tells of one who was discovered in a bathtub with her throat slit.

Hamza likewise confirms the picture of Saddam as someone "incalculably cruel," a man whose taste for personal brutality is exercised frequently and unpredictably. Once, listening to suggestions he considered defeatist, the president pulled out a revolver and simply shot dead the military officer making them; at a meeting with his top leadership, he abruptly had a general whisked off to the torture cells; a guard who incautiously confided the president's whereabouts—to a personal friend of the president—was shot on the spot for indiscretion. Hamza's phrase for Saddam is "an expertly tailored, well-barbered gangster"; the description fits. To the woman who told about losing her virginity to Saddam, his yellow eyes "were the eyes of death. He looked at me as if I were a corpse."

A NUCLEAR bomb, in the hands of such a man, is bound to be cataclysmically dangerous, rendering him, as Hamza has put it in a recent television interview, all but "invincible": the "hero of the Arab world" and readier than ever to indulge his well-proven appetite for recklessness. The result—for Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and of course Israel—is almost too frightening to contemplate.

What then is to be done? In Hamza's view, there are only two ways to stop the current train of events from unfolding toward catastrophe. Best by far would be to get rid of Saddam himself. But this can only happen if the U.S. government either acts on its own to bring it about or provides the necessary lethal aid to the Iraqi opposition. Second best would be to begin an emergency program to deprive Saddam of the skills of his 25 top nu-

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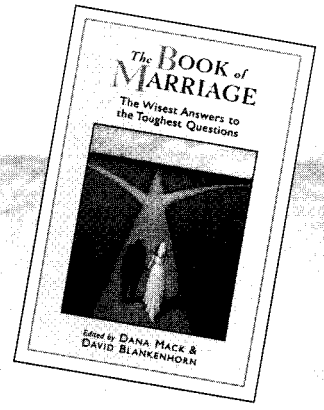

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Girl Talk

Manifesta:
Young Women,
Feminism, and the Future
by Jennifer Baumgardner
and Amy Richards

Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 416 pp. $15.00

Reviewed by
Christine Stolba

In the lore of modern feminism, the key advances for the cause of women's rights have come during two great periods of agitation and reform. The first of these "waves," as they are called, refers to the activities of suffragists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton toward the end of the 19th century. The "second wave" emerged in the 1960's and 70's, with the arrival on the ramparts of such feminist warriors as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem and the founding of institutions like the National Organization for Women (NOW).

In *Manifesta*, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, two thirty-year-old former lieutenants of Steinem, contend that a "third wave" is now gaining strength, or at least that one should be. Their book is a colorful account of their own rising cohort and its concerns, as well as a program for an "everyday feminism" suited for the world left to them by their ideological foremothers.

That world, as Baumgardner and Richards recognize, has not been very receptive to the feminist message of late. Part of the problem, they suggest, is the image of the dowdy, grim feminist of their mothers' generation. Beyond that, the organized movement has been a victim of its own success: young women see access to higher education, the professions, and birth control as part of their "cultural DNA" rather than hard-won accomplishments of the sisterhood.

If feminism is to flourish, contend Baumgardner and Richards, it has to break from the mold formed by the "serious sisters" of yesteryear. Instead of adopting a militant, man-eating stance, feminist women should feel free to "be whoever you are":

> You're sexy, a wallflower, you shop at Calvin Klein, you are a stay-at-home mom, a big Hollywood producer, a beautiful bride all in white, an ex-wife raising three kids, or you shave, pluck, *and* wax.

But—and this is key—you also have to have "political consciousness," i.e., a concern with the issues that touch young women's lives in a direct way. These include marriage, reproductive rights, sexual health, and (above all?) body image. Or, as the authors themselves sum up the source of their political program: "all threads eventually lead back to food, sex, and hair."

This focus on the narrowly personal does not mean that third-wave feminists are calling for the abandonment of the movement's broader and longstanding political objectives. *Manifesta* contains an actual thirteen-point manifesto, consisting

Christine Stolba *is an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.*

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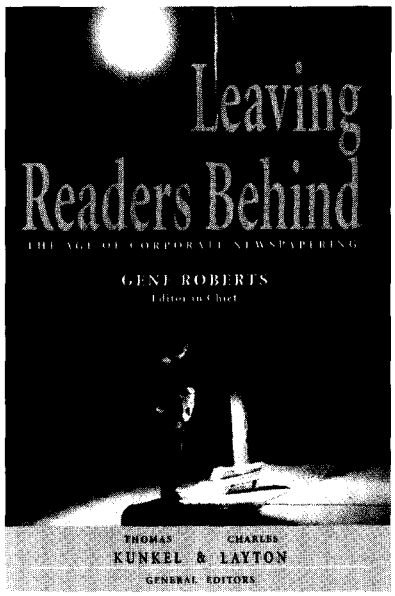

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of such familiar staples as passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; legislation to ensure "comparable worth" in women's wages; and expanding access to contraception and abortion. But the manifesto also holds out a number of novel goals, such as liberating adolescent girls from the captivity of "listless educators" or from having to endure "slut-bashing." Additionally, it calls for practicing "autokeonony," whatever that is.

Manifesta is a maddening read; or have I somehow failed to convey that? Not only is it filled with hip patter and academic and pseudo-academic jargon, but it darts haphazardly from subject to subject. This is not altogether surprising—the project was conceived, we are told, "at a downtown bar" where the authors "got extremely drunk on huge glasses of wine."

Still, the book is also refreshing in certain respects. Unlike some of their older sisters, Baumgardner and Richards do appear to recognize that women have made remarkable advances over the past several generations, and that the barricades no longer have to be manned (so to speak) with quite the same ferocity. And the encouragement they offer to feminists to be feminine—only if they *want* to be, of course!—is a welcome departure from the days of dowdiness.

At the same time, however, *Manifesta* is a deeply parochial book. Baumgardner and Richards seem to believe that the small enclave of ambitious, well-schooled, well-to-do women who constitute their circle are somehow typical of an entire generation, and that their own deep yearning for "a connection to feminism" has some significance that extends beyond the confines of their particular Manhattan zip
truth, at least on the evidence
book, the ideas of third-wave f
nists appear no less out of sync
with the real concerns of most women than those of their predecessors, and more incoherent.

The "everyday" feminism that Baumgardner and Richards purport to want does not, in its particulars, look very different from the tired policy pronouncements of groups like NOW, with abortion rights and the supposed glass ceiling of the workplace taking center stage. Beyond that, it exhibits a strong dose of contempt for the concerns that truly do animate many American women these days.

Motherhood, proclaims *Manifesta*, is "the opposite of liberation," a state where you are "bound to your body, to your baby, and to societal expectations in which motherhood means always having to say you are

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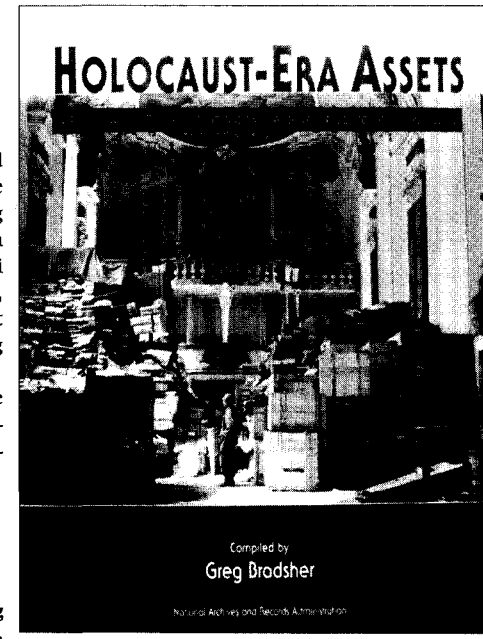

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sorry." As for home life, it is still "the most powerful and primal seat of patriarchy."

"Be whoever you want to be" is evidently a slogan that has its limits.

Margin of Error

It Ain't Necessarily So: How Media Make and Unmake the Scientific Picture of Reality
by David Murray, Joel Schwartz, and S. Robert Lichter
Rowman & Littlefield. 249 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

DESPITE ITS clunky subtitle, this is a readable and even an entertaining book. And despite its breezy title, it is a work that deserves to be taken seriously. Its three authors have set out to explain why the media persistently get things wrong, especially when reporters and editors are dealing with science-related policy issues like global warming, the health dangers allegedly presented by coffee or hamburgers, the interpretation of opinion surveys, or the incidence of hunger, rape, domestic violence, and child abuse. Their emphasis is on the print media, and heavy lumps are taken along the way by the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the weekly newsmagazines.

That something is seriously wrong with coverage of scientific/technical matters is not exactly controversial. Many of us recurrently sense that the accuracy and reliability of media reports seem inversely proportional to our own personal knowledge of any particular subject. I remember this hoary problem being called the "curse of journalism" by Hedley Donovan decades ago, when I worked for *Time* and he was editor-in-chief. It is inevitably most severe when complex research data are being addressed.

One index of the problem is the way story lines keep changing. One year it is presented as a given that children living near electric-power lines are at an increased risk of contracting leukemia; then the "given" turns out to be false. Or it is presented as a given that 25 percent of all women have been raped; later on, this too is exposed as nonsense. Wobbles like these *can* reflect genuine advances in knowledge, but on the evidence assembled here, they are more often the result of shortcomings in reporters and editors.

The authors of *It Ain't Necessarily So* are all Washington-based social scientists with academic backgrounds. Murray teaches at Georgetown and is the director of the Statistical Assessment Service, whose newsletter regularly points up journalistic mangling of research data. Schwartz is a political scientist, earlier based at Michigan and Virginia and now at the Hudson Institute. Lichter is president of the Center for Media and Public Affairs and the co-author of ten books, most of them critical examinations of the media at work. Still often cited by grouchy conservatives, including me, is Lichter's finding, back in 1982, that most journalism students at Columbia rated Fidel Castro a better leader than Ronald Reagan.

THE AUTHORS' plan of attack in *It Ain't Necessarily So* is to reveal "the inner workings" of the media, zeroing in on biases and institutional arrangements that recurrently lead to

DAN SELIGMAN *is a contributing editor of* Forbes *and the author of* A Question of Intelligence: The IQ Debate in America.

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foul-ups, and offering detailed case studies as illustrations. They begin with a chapter tackling the interesting problem of *un*reported news. Thus, in the midst of the AIDS epidemic, the *New York Times* simply ignored an April 1996 finding of the Centers for Disease Control that new diagnoses of the disease had significantly declined. Similarly unnoticed by almost all news organizations was a Justice Department report, issued at about the same time, showing sudden and sharp declines in sexual assaults.

Why do such things go unreported? The authors have several answers, one of them being the built-in media bias in favor of "bad news," which is viewed as more exciting and therefore more salable to "news consumers" (a term, sprinkled throughout this book, that I could do without). This bias is often fortified by the left-of-center predispositions of media people in general, for whom bad news constitutes further evidence of social injustice and of the need for government intervention to remedy it.

The authors' analysis at this point is not exactly original; indeed, their telling of it is buttressed by citations from a 1984 book by Ben Wattenberg, *The Good News Is the Bad News Is Wrong*. But they later delve more deeply into the issue, showing that scientists themselves increasingly tend to prefer bad news to good. In a curious illustration of a "feedback" mechanism, more and more researchers, having figured out what brings publicity, strain to present their findings as evidence of some new and growing threat to society.

Still, the lion's share of the failures elaborated in *It Ain't Necessarily So* are unquestionably traceable to enduring patterns of journalistic behavior. These patterns include a lazy-minded preference for news that seems to conform to some widely accepted "template," i.e., a familiar, ongoing story to which the reporter feels he is bringing new material. A striking example is the avalanche of publicity given in 1996 to a short, understated article in *Nature* about the apparent northward migration of a particular kind of butterfly in the American West. What grabbed the reporters was the sense that they were confirming the reality of global warming. It turned out, however, that temperatures had not risen at all in the areas where the butterflies were migrating.

Another such pattern is mindless indifference to the definitions underlying claims about survey data and other studies. A memorable case in point is Dan Rather's lead-off bombshell on an evening newscast in 1991: "One out of eight American children under the age of 12 is going hungry tonight." What Rather did not say, and presumably did not know, was that an outfit called the Food Research and Action Center had established the presence of child hunger by asking a sample of Americans whether, in the past year, there had "ever" been a "food shortage problem" in their household. By that definition, I've been suffering from hunger myself.

The authors of *It Ain't Necessarily So* offer many more reasons why the press gets things wrong, and I found myself nodding in recognition of just about all of them. But at some point, I also began to wonder whether these multifold bad habits might not be more parsimoniously subsumed under just two categories: (1) rampant innumeracy and (2) Left-liberal bias.

It seems odd that the authors nowhere focus on the sheer ineptitude of many journalists in handling numbers. Based on long years of association, I would venture that most typically start out aspiring to be not mathematicians or accountants but writers. Often possessing overdeveloped verbal skills (many of them

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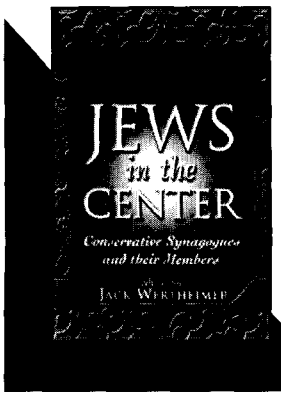

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come out of college bearing degrees in "communications"), they are nevertheless totally unclued about correlation coefficients or standard deviations or basic laws of probability. So they are hopelessly mismatched when assigned to explain—or even to summarize—an epidemiological study centered on the degree of association among different variables. Or about the levels of risk built into different kinds of behavior. Or the likelihood that this or that will happen. Inevitably, they botch it.

My own favorite error of this kind (not mentioned by the authors) is always guaranteed to surface during election campaigns. When polling results put the candidates only three percentage points apart, and the margin of error is said to be four percent, the media will inform you that the result is a statistical dead heat. In fact, the candidate who is ahead by three points is still favored to win. The only inference to be drawn when the lead falls below the margin of error is that the "confidence level" associated with the forecast has been reduced.

The treatment of political bias in *It Ain't Necessarily So* is odder still. Although (as I have indicated) the authors do cite Wattenberg on the media's liberal propensities, they do not lean on this theme, and nowhere squarely identify politics as a prime cause of the phenomenon they have set out to explain. This seems increasingly peculiar as one turns the pages of their book, since the great majority of the distortions they bring on stage clearly have had the effect of tilting stories leftward.

Possibly the authors underplay liberal bias because they are themselves identifiable as conservatives and are wary of being dismissed for partisanship. Possibly they felt that liberal bias would look to readers like a stale issue. But at least one reader sees it as a missing issue. Especially when he thinks about those Columbia journalism students now on the loose out there.

Money Talks

Unfree Speech:
The Folly of Campaign Finance Reform
by Bradley A. Smith
Princeton. 286 pp. $26.95

Reviewed by
Terry Eastland

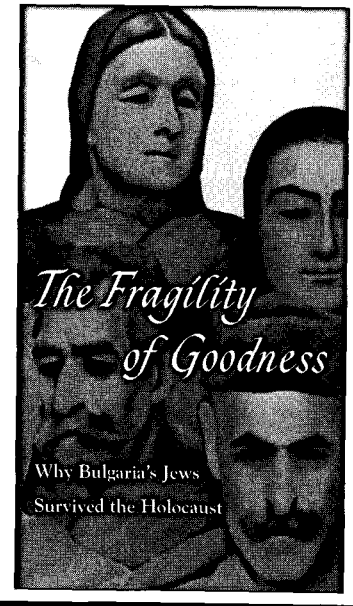
In April, the Senate approved the most comprehensive overhaul of federal campaign-finance law in the past quarter-century. The bill, co-sponsored by Republican John McCain of Arizona and Democrat Russell Feingold of Wisconsin, would ban so-called "soft money"—the currently unregulated contributions that corporations, unions, and individuals make to political parties—and restrict certain kinds of end-of-campaign advertising by unions, corporations, and interest groups like the National Abortion Rights Action League or the National Rifle Association. The Senate's action ensures that campaign-finance reform will be a major theme this year in the House of Representatives, where similar legislation will soon be taken up. President Bush, yet to commit himself, will be forced to adopt a position if a bill is passed.

Bradley A. Smith, a former law professor now serving on the Federal Election Commission (FEC), could thus not have picked a better time for this attempt to expose, as his subtitle puts it, "the folly of campaign-finance reform." Smith opposes the McCain-Feingold bill, and indeed argues for repealing current regulations altogether. The

Terry Eastland *is the editor of* Freedom of Expression in the Supreme Court: The Defining Cases.

The Fragility of Goodness

Why Bulgaria's Jews Survived the Holocaust



Tzvetan Todorov

Translated by Arthur Denner

With the exception of Denmark, Bulgaria was the only country allied with Nazi Germany that did not annihilate or turn over its Jewish population. Here, Tzvetan Todorov assembles and interprets for the first time key evidence from this episode of Bulgarian history. He reconstructs what happened in Bulgaria during World War II and recounts the actions of individuals and groups that spared Bulgaria's Jews.

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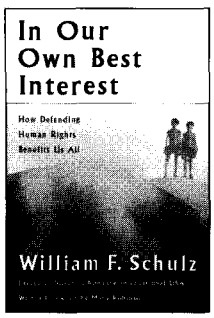

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How Defending Human Rights Benefits Us All

William F. Schulz

With a Foreword by Mary Robinson

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—**William Schulz**, from *In Our Own Best Interest*

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—**Ariel Dorfman**

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one, simple reform he does favor is to liberate the "unfree" speech that results from those regulations and thereby return us "to the system of campaign-finance 'regulation' envisioned by the framers of the Constitution and enshrined in the First Amendment."

Unfree Speech does not start with the present moment, however, but with a review of history. The first federal reform of campaign finance was the Tillman Act of 1907, which banned contributions by federally chartered banks and corporations. This law, Smith writes, "had little practical effect other than to rechannel the way in which contributions were made," by (for example) allowing corporations to donate goods and services in lieu of cash. Over the years, additional reforms were passed whose ineffectuality, in Smith's rendering, unfortunately failed to dull enthusiasm for still further reforms.

It is beyond dispute that the history of campaign-finance reform is replete with unintended consequences, of which Smith recounts a number. For example, the 1943 Smith-Connally act, which prohibited labor unions from contributing directly to campaigns for the duration of the war, actually increased their involvement in politics. To the chagrin of the bill's Republican sponsors, unions created separate committees that collected money from members through automatic payroll check-offs and then donated it to their chosen—i.e., Democratic—candidates. This practice, which for the many union members who are not of the liberal persuasion amounts to a novel form of taxation without representation, is still with us today.

BUT THIS brings us to more recent history. In 1971, Congress passed the Federal Elections Campaign Act and then, responding to abuses, amended it significantly in 1974 by setting limits on both "hard-money" contributions—that is, contributions to candidates themselves—and spending. The new law was immediately challenged in the courts. In a landmark 1976 case, *Buckley* v. *Valeo*, the Supreme Court sustained the limits on contributions but struck down those on spending. Two years later, the FEC made it possible to skirt the hard-money restrictions by sanctioning soft-money contributions. The 1974 amendments (as modified in *Buckley*) and the FEC's soft-money rules constitute, as Smith observes, "the basic framework for federal campaign-finance laws" today and thus the object of the current reform effort led by John McCain.

Unfree Speech provides useful information on the subjects in today's headlines. Consider "issue advocacy," which is "political discourse that does not expressly support or oppose a candidate but that has the potential to influence voters' thinking about a candidate." Issue ads were not much in evidence before the mid-1990's. But, in another unforeseen development, candidates short on funds because of the limits on contributions began turning to their parties—and their unregulated soft-money accounts—for help, and that help has often been provided in the form of ads. Nor are the parties the only ones resorting to this means of electioneering. Groups seeking to find ways to participate in the political process have also bought issue ads in which a candidate's records or views are highlighted, favorably or disparagingly.

Turning to the reformers themselves, Smith takes apart their leading arguments one by one. Among the most prominent is the idea that campaign spending is too high. As Smith shows, however, total spending for all local, state, and federal elections last year came to no more than $15 per eligible voter, hardly an extravagant amount. More to the point, there is no objective way to measure how much would be too much.

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Against the Idols of the Age

David Stove

Edited and with an introduction by

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Since its inception in the 1940s, the firld of science studies, originally intended to bridge the gap between science and the humanities, has been the center of controversy and debate. The most notable figures in this debate are Thomas Kuhn and Karl Popper. In *Scientific Irrationalism: Origins of a Postmodern Cult*, David Stove demonstrates how extravagant has been the verbiage wasted on this issue and how irrational the combatants. He shows that Kuhn and Popper share considerable common ground. Stove argues that the problems all reside in the reasoning of the critics. He identifies the logical mistakes by and conceptual elisions made by Kuhn and Popper and their supporters, as well as their collective dependency on a single argument made by the philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, David Hume.

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Another and more basic reason adduced by reformers is that contributions corrupt the legislative process. To this, Smith offers the rejoinder that traditional corruption, which is to say bribery, is prohibited already, while the sort of corruption the reformers object to usually boils down to the correlation they see between contributions and a candidate's voting behavior once elected. Showing such a correlation would of course be necessary to prove corruption, but by itself it does not amount to corruption. In any case, Smith cites overwhelming evidence that, as compared with such factors as party agenda, personal ideology, and the desires of constituents, campaign contributions play a relatively small role in floor voting.

In his discussion of constitutional issues, which is the best part of the book, Smith unsurprisingly disagrees with the Supreme Court's conclusion in *Buckley* that preventing corruption is a sufficiently compelling reason—the only one the Justices could come up with—to uphold limits on contributions. The Court, Smith writes, was too deferential to Congress. Since, today, "the claims of corruption remain . . . little more than conjecture," and thus not enough to justify an abridgement of the First Amendment, it would be appropriate for the Court to overrule its judgment.

That the Court hardly seems ready to move in Smith's direction is something he well recognizes. In the 2000 case of *Nixon* v. *Shrink Missouri Government PAC*, it sustained a Missouri law limiting contributions even though the only "evidence" of corruption took the form of unsupported allegations by state lawmakers. In the Court's view, the mere fact that such harms might be plausible justified the limits. But the upshot of *Shrink*, as Smith observes, is that the Court provides less protection to political speech—the very heart of the First Amendment's concern—than to other forms of speech, like commercial advertising.

Whether it will provide even less protection is a question raised by McCain-Feingold. If the bill becomes law, First Amendment challenges will most assuredly be brought. Anticipating the issues in litigation, Smith cites the Supreme Court's holding that political parties have the same rights to engage in political advocacy as do other groups; if soft money is in fact denied by Congress, and if the Court sustains the prohibition, the parties will be inhibited in the exercise of those rights.

Similarly with the right of independent groups to make unlimited expenditures, which McCain-Feingold would restrict by banning ads within 60 days of a general election or 30 days of a primary. If the Court upholds *this* restriction, it would have, Smith argues, "the bizarre effect of granting political speech less protection at the time of political campaigns—the exact moment that people are most focused on, and most interested in discussing, political issues."

Though unfortunately marred by a number of typographical errors, *Unfree Speech* sounds many important themes, of which one of the most striking is that the effort to limit the influence of money in politics inevitably enhances the role of *non*-monetary elites, including the news media (where many of the most fervent enthusiasts for reform happen to reside). Above all, though, *Unfree Speech* is a timely reminder of the pertinence of the First Amendment and of "that tricky little phrase," as Smith puts it, "that begins, 'Congress shall make no law.'" Soon enough we will see whether Congress is indeed going to make a law that will infringe on First Amendment liberties.

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Escapists

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay
by Michael Chabon
Random House. 659 pp. $26.95

Reviewed by
John Podhoretz

ONE OF the delicious ironies of 20th-century popular culture is the extent to which the images and sounds that defined the American Century sprang from the fertile imaginings of Jews only recently resident amid the amber waves of grain. Israel Baline, native of Byelorussia, wrote both the music and the utterly un-ironic lyrics to "God

JOHN PODHORETZ *is a columnist for the* New York Post *and a contributing editor of the* Weekly Standard. *His review of* Paradise Park *by Allegra Goodman appeared in our May issue.*

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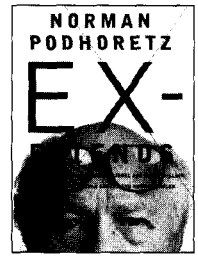

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Bless America" under the name of Irving Berlin. Aaron Copland, the Brooklyn-born son of Russian immigrants, sought out and achieved what he called "conscious Americanism" in his orchestral works, *Billy the Kid* and *Appalachian Spring*.

And in 1938, two teenage Jewish boys in Cleveland created a character designed to fight "for truth, justice, and the American way." Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel sold all rights to their creation—a bespectacled reporter hailing from a small town in Kansas who is in actuality an invulnerable and all-powerful immigrant from a distant planet—for $130, thus giving the lie to the classic anti-Semitic notion that Jews have an innate understanding of how to make and keep money.

The story of Siegel and Shuster's invention of Superman is the biographical kernel of Michael Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, which in April was awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Published at the end of last year, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* is a singular achievement—a novel about the petty glories of pulp entertainment that evokes, analyzes, and transcends the world of comic books whose rise and decline it chronicles. Sentence by sentence, Chabon has always been an uncommonly good writer, perhaps the best prose stylist of his generation (he is thirty-eight). But there was no hint in his previous novels, the best-selling *Mysteries of Pittsburgh* and *Wonder Boys*, of the propulsive force, narrative command, and beguiling wit he displays here.

SAMMY CLAY, né Klayman, seventeen years old in 1939, is a shipping clerk working for a novelty company who lives with his mother and grandmother in a Brooklyn apartment. One night his mother wakes him and forces him to share his bed with a cousin he has never met, a thin, pensive Czech refugee named Josef Kavalier, three years his senior.

Sammy is a classic American type, who "dreamed the usual Brooklyn dreams of flight and transformation and escape. He dreamed with fierce contrivance, transmuting himself into a major American novelist, or a famous smart person, like Clifton Fadiman, or perhaps into a heroic doctor." Throughout the novel, he labors intermittently on a Dreiser-like tome he calls *American Disillusionment*. But his true, secret, and guilty passion is for comic books, the low cultural phenomenon of the moment.

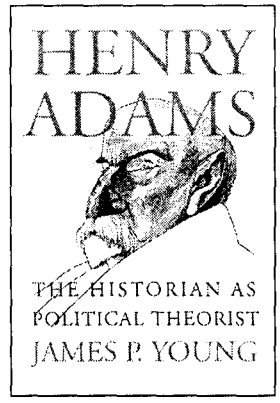
Josef is from another world, literally and metaphorically. The eldest son of a distinguished Jewish family in Prague, he has spent his teenage years studying with a Houdini-like magician, learning how to escape from handcuffs and canvas sacks wrapped in chains and locks. His own escape from Prague involves magic of a more mystical kind. In Chabon's imagining, a secret society of Bohemian Jews has long guarded the inert form that was once the Golem, a clay homunculus legendarily given life by a 16th-century rabbi to protect the Jewish community from pogrom. The approach of the Nazi army has convinced these Jews that the Golem must be removed from the country disguised as a corpse in a coffin. Josef's family has liquidated all its assets to buy him an exit visa and a boat ticket to America. But upon reaching the German border he is turned back, and he ends up leaving Czechoslovakia hiding alongside the Golem in the coffin, and thence, via a tortuous itinerary, to Brooklyn.

Aside from his prestidigitatory skills, Josef is also a graphic artist of talent, and he and Sammy team up on a character they call the Escapist—"working for the liberation of all who toil in chains." They sell

Henry Adams

The Historian as Political Theorist

James P. Young



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the idea to Sammy's boss, who has been looking for a new way to market joy buzzers. The cover of their first comic book features the Escapist punching the man who would soon decimate Josef's family: "As for Hitler, he came flying at you backward, right-crossed clean out of the painting, head thrown back, forelock a-splash, arms flailing, jaw trailing a long red streamer of teeth."

The Escapist is a huge success from the get-go, and the boys find themselves awash in money and traveling in unexpected circles. They meet Salvador Dali and Max Ernst at a party at the Greenwich Village home of an aristocratic bohemian whose beautiful daughter, Rosa Luxembourg Saks, becomes Josef's lover. Sammy, whom everyone but he himself believes to be a homosexual, is initiated into the secret world of gay Manhattan by the actor who plays the Escapist on the radio. "Great stuff, the Escapist," Orson Welles tells the boys at the premiere of *Citizen Kane*.

Josef, however, will not allow himself to enjoy his success. He spends his days fruitlessly trying to arrange his family's escape, and comes to mock his own pretension to be a fighter for truth and justice:

> He had been assuring himself, and listening to Sammy's assurances, that they were hastening, by their make-believe hammering at . . . Hitler, the intervention of the United States into the war in Europe. Now it occurred to Joe to wonder if all they had been doing, all along, was indulging their own worst impulses and assuring the creation of another generation of men who revered only strength and domination.

Finally, Josef lights on a method to secure his younger brother Thomas's freedom, using his money to help a Jewish rescue committee buy a ship that will smuggle children from Lisbon to the New World. The seeming initial success of this venture allows him to envision a future with the lovely Rosa, and the two of them rent an apartment together on the Upper West Side. But this classic American fairy tale cannot last. Sammy, attending a party on the Jersey shore with Manhattan's gay elite, is viciously beaten by police who raid the house, being spared arrest by a phone call from his mother informing him that Thomas Kavalier has died.

Fleeing New York, Josef now joins the Navy, unknowingly leaving behind a pregnant Rosa. He lands at a listening post in Antarctica, where he decides he will at last take his revenge on Hitler by staging an unnecessary raid against a German listening post and killing its sole inhabitant in cold blood. He is awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and promptly disappears. Still traumatized by his beating, Sammy marries Rosa, assumes the fatherhood of his cousin's son, and settles into a joyless suburban existence in Long Island.

The denouement occurs in 1953, as Congress is beginning to crack down on the comics industry following the publication of Frederic Wertham's crackpot tome *The Seduction of the Innocent*. Joseph's son, now twelve years old, discovers his father among a circle of magicians at a shop in New York City, just as the coffin containing the Golem finds its way to Josef at long last:

> The entire box was filled, to a depth of about seven inches, with a fine powder, pigeon-gray and opalescent, that Joe recognized at once from boyhood excursions as the silty bed of the Moldau. The speculations of those who feared that the Golem, removed from the shores of the river that mothered it, might degrade had been proved correct.

Chabon's Golem is a symbol of the murdered European diaspora, Josef and Sammy of the remnant that fought impotently for its rescue. There is nothing offensive in this conversion of the Shoah into metaphor; but there is something off about it. The Jews of Central Europe, both those who were murdered and those who escaped murder, were ordinary people. In attempting to memorialize them and pay tribute to their suffering, Chabon descends

We mourn the death of

Daniel J. Silver

1952-2001

contributor and friend.

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into a false mysticism. It is true that their tradition featured a certain mystical strain, but it is also horrifically true that mysticism was among the forces that led to their extermination—an evil mysticism that promised the world would be purified by their removal.

Chabon, perhaps unconsciously echoing George Eliot's depiction of Jewry in *Daniel Deronda*, sets the Jews of Central Europe apart. Like Daniel Deronda himself, Josef is an impossibly grand character, omnicompetent, capable of near-supernatural feats of skill, survival, and self-sacrifice. These qualities make it difficult for a reader to feel any sort of commonality with him, and in this way Chabon inadvertently denies some measure of the humanity of Hitler's victims.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay combines fable, magical realism, boy's adventure storytelling, Horatio Alger, and mordant humor in an exhilarating stew that also attempts something entirely new in the depiction of the European Jewish catastrophe and the guilt suffered by those who succeeded in escaping it. Only when one has closed it for the last time, having spent 656 closely printed pages with the title characters, does it become unfortunately clear that this extraordinarily ambitious novel does not have all that much of interest to *say*. *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* is a wonderful book but, despite its scope, a small one.

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Rogue-Patron Linkages in an Emerging World Old

Thomas H. Henriksen is a senior fellow and associate director at the Hoover Institution.

What a difference a decade makes in international politics. Just ten years ago, the Soviet Union collapsed, China seemed mired in domestic concerns, and the United States appeared headed for a carefree era. Pundits pontificated about a security vacuum while Washington slashed defense spending.

At that time, the so-called rogue states, like Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, were the only clouds looming on the horizon. Isolated internationally, these pariahs demonstrated a propensity for internal cruelty and external threats. They coveted weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear and biological warheads, and missiles to deliver their deadly payloads. Unpredictable and erratic, they entered Washington's consciousness solely as insular but containable troublemakers.

The United States paid little heed to Moscow or Beijing as it groped for policies to engage or contain rogue states. Our approach fluctuated from confronting Iraq through sanctions, ostracism, and occasional bombing to engaging North Korea through rewarding perceived nuclear restraint with concessions in hopes of changing Pyongyang's behavior.

By the end of the 1990s, the rogue regimes no longer looked so isolated from the major powers. Russia and China sold arms and technology to them, took up their cause in the Security Council as Washington sought to enforce United Nations sanctions against them, and, more recently, reestablished or deepened diplomatic ties.

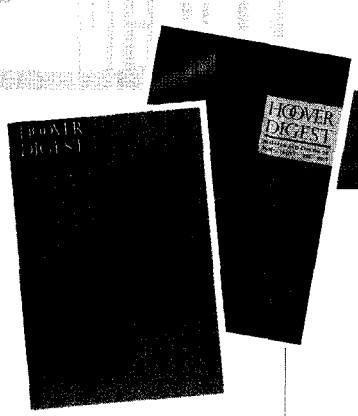
A series of events dramatically announced this turnaround. China's uproar following the accidental bombing of its embassy in Belgrade during NATO's Kosovo air campaign demonstrated that Washington could not lead an attack on rogue-like Serbia without big power consequences. Another example surfaced when North Korea's leader, Kim Jung Il, first consulted with Beijing before agreeing to the historic summit with his South Korean counterpart last June. The recent Russian and Iranian agreement to strengthen military ties is another illustration of this trend.

Rogue states and their former patrons are cooperating for reasons vastly different from their cold war collaboration. Then, Moscow sought to spread communism in the Third World. Devoid of ideological objectives, Russia and China now seek to expand arm sales and exert leverage with Washington for geopolitics, pure and simple. Beijing can turn up the heat on the United States for supporting Taiwan—which China considers its territory—by improving Iraq's air defense systems and selling missile technology to Pakistan, Libya, and Syria. Because Moscow resents U.S. influence in the Balkans and its spearheading the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into Eastern Europe, it exports tanks and artillery to Iraq and cooperates with Iran to build a nuclear power plant. By confronting the United States asymmetrically, Russia and China can redress their military and political weakness vis-à-vis the sole superpower.

These transformed political realities demand a rethinking of American policy. **Washington must see the world in global terms,** not through a narrow lens trained on a lone maverick. A strategy for undoing the rogue-patron affiliations should also be incorporated into U.S. relations with Moscow and Beijing. Whatever the mix of diplomacy and force, Washington cannot be complacent with the emerging rogue-patron collusion

— Thomas H. Henriksen

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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A world of ideas on public policy.

Patents and Public Health: a Good or Bad Mix?

By Dr. Harvey Bale

Some activist groups that oppose "globalization" have campaigned publicly against the alleged deleterious effects of pharmaceutical patents on access to medicines, particularly in the developing world. They point to TRIPS – the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on patent protection – as the particular villain.

The reality is that TRIPS will accelerate the introduction of new, patented medicines, including treatments for the infectious diseases that are the major killers of children and adults in developing countries. At the same time, neither TRIPS nor any other single international agreement can provide the answer to the problems – poverty, lack of infrastructure, internal civil strife – that prevent people in many developing countries from getting medical care.

Because the foes of patent rights command so much attention from governments and the media, it is worth looking more closely at the issues. As an example, let us take this assertion in a recent report from a well-known non-governmental organization, Oxfam: "Every week, 200,000 people die of infectious diseases, the great majority of them women, men and children living in poverty in the developing world. Global patent rules agreed at the World Trade Organization in 1994 are deepening the public-health crisis by increasing the cost of medicines."

Infectious diseases are indeed a serious developing-country problem, but Oxfam's argument is illogical. In these countries, access is often poor for even the most basic and off-patent "essential" medicines. Less than 5% of the essential medicines as defined by the World Health Organization's essential drugs list (EDL) are covered by patent protection anywhere in the world, let alone in developing-countries, many of which have no effective intellectual property laws.

> ***Without strong and effective global intellectual property rules, the gap between developed and developing countries will only grow in the future.***

Further, where patent protection has been introduced in the past decade, it has not had a significant negative impact on access to medicines.

Even at the lowest prices, many of the world's poorest people cannot afford or obtain low-cost generic treatments for malaria, TB, and other common diseases. Political priorities given to public health, the provision of financing for poorer people and medical infrastructure (rural clinics, diagnostic facilities), and involving churches and responsible NGOs in delivery are the determining factors in providing access to health care.

Some activists also freely assert that patents give innovators of new treatments unfair "monopoly" power over prices throughout the 20-year life of a patent. This ignores reality in two ways. Firstly, patents give marketing exclusivity rights to a single drug or vaccine, not a monopoly, since there are usually alternative treatments to any medicine. For example, there are at least six patented protease inhibitors for the treatment of AIDS. The existence of a number of new treatment options, spurred by patent protection, helps ensure medical choice and price competition. Secondly, the holder of a "20 year" patent right has actually only 8-10 years to recover investment costs in a new medicine and to fund new research to survive, since it typically takes 10-12 years of tests and regulatory review for innovative medicines to reach patients.

Compulsory licensing – under which governments force companies to license their patented medicines to generic manufacturers – has been touted as a solution to the access issue. Its proponents see the issue in terms of consumer price benefits. The competition benefits are small, however, and the long term damage of widespread use of compulsory licensing is likely to be significant.

Today, TRIPS is encouraging companies in India, Korea and other developing countries to shift from manufacturing generics towards pursuing their own innovative research – including the use of biotechnology tools. But if loose compulsory licensing rules are adopted, both the patients and the economies of these countries will ultimately suffer through the withdrawal of these new competitors, who will find it easier to slip back into their old business strategy of copying medicines others have discovered.

The fact is, without full respect for TRIPS, many countries' industries and patients risk losing out on the benefits of the genome-based research that is increasingly the basis of biomedical innovation. Thus, the real global social threat is that – without strong and effective global intellectual property rules – the gap between developed and developing countries will only grow in the future.

Dr Harvey Bale is Director General of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations, in Geneva, Switzerland (www.ifpma.org).

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